



NAVY NEWS

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DARING TO BE DIFFERENT

Life on board
the Type 45

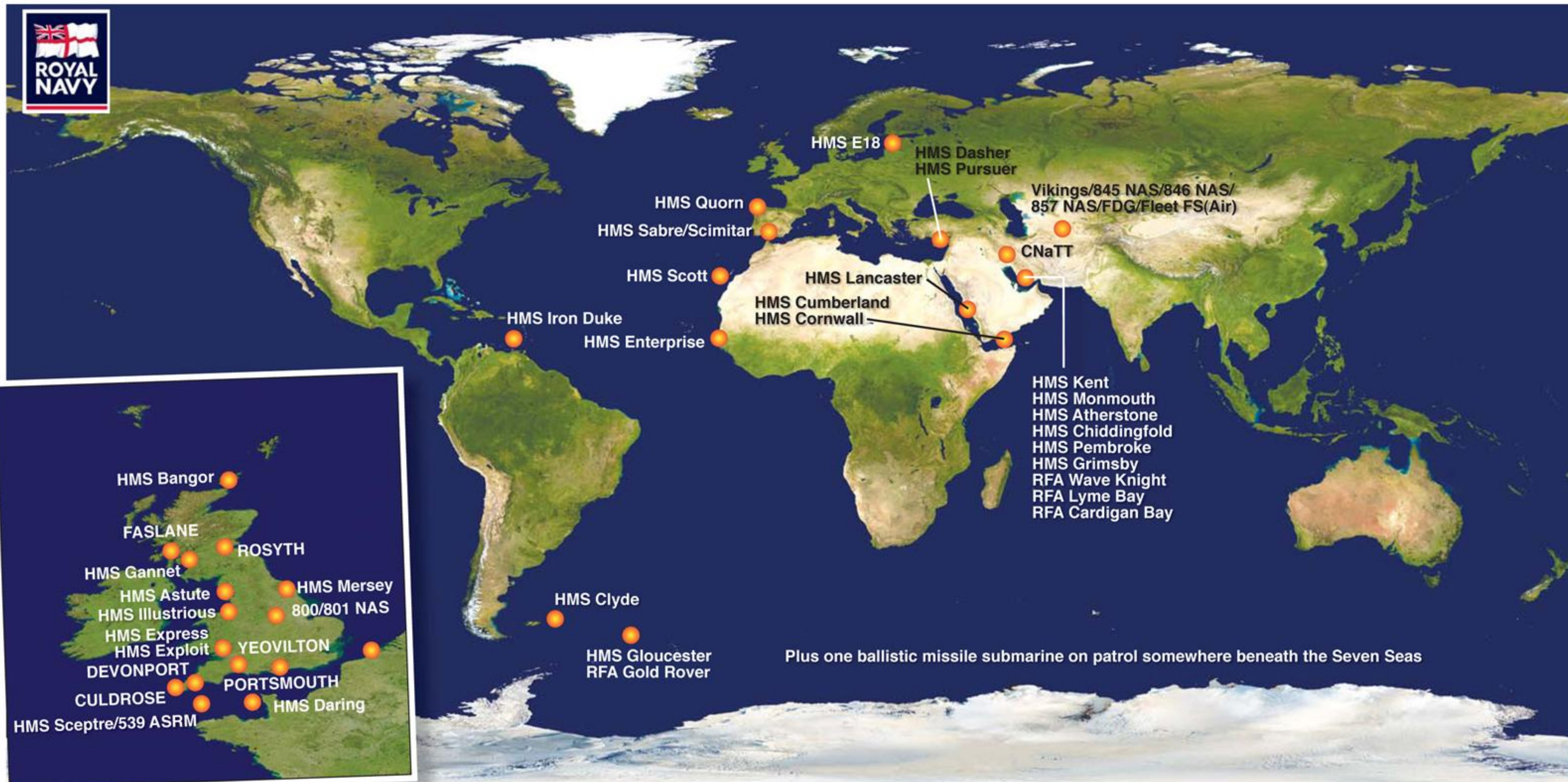
FINAL FLIGHT

Flypast marks
end of FAA
centenary



ASTUTE MOVE

HMS Astute, the Royal Navy's most powerful hunter-killer submarine, has put to sea for the first time at the start of an intensive programme of trials - see page 7. Picture: LA(Phot) JJ Massey



Fleet Focus

WELL, that was 2009 – and with its passing so ends the Noughties.

The decade began with the Navy ordering three Type 45 destroyers and laying down the first Astute-class submarine.

And the decade ends with the first Type 45, **HMS Daring**, about to formally enter service (see pages 23-25), the fifth, **HMS Defender**, running down the slipway (see right) and the first **Astute** finally putting to sea (see page 7).

The opening decade of the 21st Century has, of course, seen commitments new (Afghanistan and anti-piracy operations, notably).

But otherwise, *plus ça change...*

We're still chasing drug runners (with a considerable degree of success) in the Caribbean; the curtain has almost come down on **HMS Iron Duke's** record-breaking deployment (see pages 16-17).

We're still guarding our South Atlantic territories. **HMS Gloucester** and **RFA Gold Rover** headed to the idyll of South Georgia to practise aiding the distant archipelago (see page 4).

There's still an Antarctic patrol ship although this season the duty is performed not by usual visitor **HMS Endeavour** (thanks to her flooding incident 12 months ago) but, for the first time, **HMS Scott** (see page 4).

There's still a handful of Type 42 destroyers in service. **HMS York's** about to relieve her sister Gloucester (see page 4) while **HMS Edinburgh** has become the very last of this venerable class to receive a refit (see page 22).

HMS Sceptre is still in service (31 years and counting now...). She's been practising insertion operations with the Royal Marines off Plymouth (see page 6).

There's still no Royal yacht, but for ten or so minutes, **HMS Express** performed that duty carrying the Queen into the heart of the rejuvenated Gloucester docks (see page 19).

Sea Kings are still plucking people out of the sea (**771 NAS**) or off the mountains (**HMS Gannet**). The former is our Squadron of the Month (see page 12), the latter enjoys a far greater honour: a commendation from the Commander-in-Chief Fleet for the selfless actions of its personnel (see page 12).

But there's no longer an **HMS Trafalgar**; the hunter-killer submarine pays off this month after making her final entry to Devonport (see page 6).

There's still a ballistic missile submarine on patrol 365/24/7 (we can't tell you which one or where it is...) and minehunters still disappear over the horizon for months on end with NATO; the latest to slot into a task group is **HMS Quorn** which has 'enjoyed' a challenging crossing of the Atlantic (see page 4).

Some commitments change. No longer do we try to stop oil leaving Iraq, rather we encourage its safe passage by protecting its two oil platforms. **HMS Kent** has just finished her six months doing just that, handing over to her sister, **HMS Monmouth** (see page 5).

And some commitments are new. There's a notable RN presence in Afghanistan (not just the Sea Kings of the **Commando Helicopter Force** and **857 NAS**, but engineers of **MASU** and staff scattered throughout that troubled land). They're now joined by RN personnel supporting the RAF's 78 Sqn (see page 9).

Another addition to the RN/RM workload is supporting the concerted international anti-piracy effort in the Indian Ocean. The missions of HM Ships **Cumberland** and **Cornwall** (see page 4) are just about done... but **HMS Lancaster** is now east of Suez to pick up where they left off (see page 5).

And finally, the public celebrations of the centennial year of Naval aviation reached their climax with a magnificent fly-past over **HMS Illustrious** on the Mersey (see pages 20-1).

A new Defender of our realm

THERE'S a new Defender of the high seas with the launch of number five of six Type 45 destroyer.

HMS Defender plunged into the Clyde at Govan watched by several thousand people – from the men and women who built her to hundreds of local schoolchildren.

Lady Massey, the wife of Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Alan Massey, performed the honours, even giving the 8,500-tonne a push to get **Defender** moving down the slipway (although several tonnes of lubricants possibly had more of an impact...).

The time was precisely 4.20pm on Trafalgar Day – a date chosen more for the level of the Clyde than Royal Navy symbolism.

The Band of HM Royal Marines provided the music while hundreds of balloons were released into the air as **Defender** began to move down the slip.

Aside from thousands of shipwrights, engineers and locals, the occasion was watched by dignitaries from Glasgow and Exeter.

Both cities have agreed to be affiliated with the new destroyer – motto *fendendo vince* (By defending, I am victorious) – picking up where their namesake Type 42s left off.

Glaswegians have been without a ship since **HMS Glasgow** paid off four years; Exonians have only been devoid of a warship since May when their veteran destroyer was decommissioned.

Defender now moves along the Clyde to the BVT yard at Scotstoun where all the Type 45s have been fitted out. She won't be going to sea until 2011...

...whereas the second of the six-strong class, **HMS Dauntless**, has just left Scotstoun and should be appearing in Portsmouth for the very first time any day now.

She's due in her home for the next quarter-century in early December, when she'll also be formally handed over to the RN.

Picture: PO(Phot) Donny Osmond

■ Daring feature, page 23



'We are their legacy...'

A WREATH of poppies drifts in the Gulf of Aden, cast into these troubled waters by the sailors of **HMS Cornwall**.

As their brethren across the Armed Forces did, the men and women of the frigate paused front-line operations to pay their respects to sacrifices past and present on Remembrance Sunday.

The Type 22 frigate is leading NATO's Standing Maritime Group 2 on Operation Ocean Shield, commanding an international force of warships attempting to stifle Somali pirates.

The ship's company gathered on Cornwall's flight deck to remember the final three British WW1 veterans, all of whom sadly passed away this year, as well as more recent victims of conflict.

The ship's Royal Marines detachment read out the names of every fellow green beret who had laid down his life in Afghanistan in the past 12 months.

After two minutes' silence, wreaths were cast into the ocean by Cornwall's CO Cdr Johnny Ley, task group commander Cdre Steve Chick, his chief-of-staff Capt Irenin of the Turkish Navy, Cornwall's Executive Warrant Officer WO1 Trev Trevarthen, Mne Shane Boylan from the RM detachment and finally AB(CIS) Mellia Robertson representing the ship's company, as the strains of the *Last Post* drifted across the Gulf of Aden.

"Our thoughts are very much with our colleagues in Afghanistan, but this is also about remembering all of those in the Naval Service and elsewhere who have laid down their lives," said Cornwall's operations officer Lt Cdr Luke Hayashi.

"Here, on operations, it brings home the point that we are their legacy and the best way we can honour their memory is in wholly fulfilling our own mission in protecting these waters."

The ceremony off Yemen was one of a myriad around the world to mark the nation's fallen on Remembrance Sunday.

Plymouth witnessed two major acts of thanksgiving: a Festival of Remembrance in the Pavilions, followed by the formal service on the Hoe in the shadow of the Naval War Memorial.

Sailors from **HMS Drake** and the **Devonport Flotilla** formed three 12-man guards, Royal Marines from **3 Commando Brigade**, an Army guard from **29 Commando**, plus an 80-strong RN platoon of senior and junior rates, 300 local Territorial Army soldiers, also took part in proceedings, with the **Band of HM Royal Marines Plymouth** providing the appropriate musical accompaniment.

The ship's company of **HMS Scimitar** left The Rock behind to make the 35-mile trip across the Strait of Gibraltar to Tangier and the Church of St Andrew, which has served British worshippers in the Moroccan port for more than 100 years.

Its graveyard is the last resting place of 13 British and Commonwealth Servicemen killed in WW2.

Scimitar's sailors formed a guard of honour; their CO Lt Matt Sykes laid a wreath and AB(Sea) Gavin Armstrong placed a cross of remembrance on the grave of an airman killed in January 1945.

Sixteen hundred miles to the north, a wreath and White Ensign rest on the wreck of HMS Vanguard, victim of the worst accident in Royal Navy history.

The battleship exploded at anchor in Scapa Flow late on July 9 1917.

Of 845 men aboard the dreadnought, just two survived. More than nine decades later, **HMS Bangor** stopped over the site - 58°52'3"N, 3°6'30"W, today marked by East Cardinal Buoy - off the Isle of Flotta.

After two minutes' silence, the mine

countermeasures vessel's dive team slipped into the waters of Scapa Flow and headed 110ft down, where they fixed a weighted wreath and White Ensign to the remains of the leviathan.

The ceremony was part of a double act of remembrance in the great natural harbour. Bangor's sister HMS Penzance led tributes to HMS Royal Oak on the 70th anniversary of her torpedoing by U47.

Whilst the loss of the Royal Oak is one of those tragedies chiseled into the collective memory of the Senior Service, the loss of the Vanguard two decades before has rather been lost in the mists of time. Ten more men lost their lives in the explosion than were killed when Royal Oak sank.

It's thought a long-smouldering fire in a coal bunker caused cordite charges in an adjacent compartment to ignite. The results were cataclysmic.

Eyewitnesses described a series of explosions, before one final, awful blast which ripped Vanguard apart, showering Scapa with molten metal and burning debris, setting the Scottish heather alight.

Six hundred and twenty-two of the fallen are listed on Chatham's naval memorial, 126 on Portsmouth's and 74 on the monument on Plymouth Hoe, with around 20 victims buried near the wreck site.

Bangor was a fitting choice to lead the tributes: until recently her Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Peter Noblett, was Executive Officer of the current Vanguard, the ballistic missile submarine.

He fixed a wreath to the buoy, while wreaths were also placed on behalf of the present Vanguard, and the previous bearer of the name, the legendary post-war battleship whose association asked that the sacrifice of their forebears be remembered.

True to the spirit of the Corps, detachments from **45 Commando** could be found in the home towns of green berets who lost their lives during the marines' recent operations in Afghanistan, taking part in local parades and supporting bereaved families.

Yankee Company paraded in Arbroath, X-Ray Company took part both in ceremonies at the Cenotaph in Whitehall and at the Festival of Remembrance in the Albert Hall the previous evening.

And at 45's home of RM Condor, Regimental Sergeant Major WO1 Steven Shepherd read the roll of honour: 12 men killed serving with Battle Group North in Helmand last winter.

The service was a private gathering for comrades, friends and families of those killed and wounded in Afghanistan.

Personnel from **RNAS Yeovilton** paid their respects not in a hangar, as they have typically done on November 11, but in the nearby churchyard of St Bartholomew's, the memorial church of the Fleet Air Arm.

Base Warrant Officer WO1 Colin Bauld read a roll of honour of all RN/RM personnel killed in the line of duty since the beginning of last year.

There could be few more spectacular backdrops for any November ceremonies than the waters of Montserrat, where **HMS Iron Duke** paused to reflect on sacrifices past and present in the shadow of the island's active volcano.

And small though she might be, Wales University Royal Naval Unit **HMS Express** provided sailors to parade at ceremonies in Aberystwyth, Bridgend, Cardiff and Swansea (and attended a concert of remembrance in Swansea).





Small ship in a big Pond

ROUGH weather. Atlantic.

Never pleasant.

Rough weather. Atlantic. Shallow-draught, 750-tonne minehunter. Really unpleasant.

But it could have been so much worse...

HMS Quorn's American odyssey has come to an end with a near-record-breaking run across the North Atlantic.

The Portsmouth-based warship is the RN's representative with a NATO mine warfare force which left the 'comfort' of European waters behind to spend a couple of months exercising with the Americans and Canadians along the Eastern Seaboard.

The last port of call on other side of the ocean was the island idyll of Bermuda. Thereafter, the international force set a course for the Azores.

It is roughly 1,500 nautical miles from the British overseas territory to Ponta Delgada in the Azores – which is a long old poke...

... but not as long as 2,725 nautical miles (*obviously* – Ed).

Because as the Hunt-class ship conducted a replenishment somewhere in the steep Atlantick (and it was steep, as some of Quorn's ship's company will testify), the weathermen brought grim tidings: the Azores would be hit by severe weather right about the time the NATO force would be there.

The group's Danish CO plumped for Plan B, La Coruña in Spain instead, and a 1,500-mile journey almost doubled to a 13-day non-stop passage.

The Quorns thought it might have been the longest single passage by a Hunt-class warship. Not quite. Back in 1982 HM Ships Brecon and Ledbury were sent south to support the liberation of the Falklands. They stopped just once: Ascension Island, 3,745 nautical miles from Portsmouth.

But back to 2009 and the end of a 2,725-mile crossing.

"We went alongside El Ferrol Naval Base with the weather still balmy and showing no signs of the approaching rough weather," said Lt Cdr Tim Nield.

The extended crossing of The Pond did allow for some additional training with the other vessels in the NATO force ahead of historic ordnance disposal work in European waters – more typical fare for the task group – for the rest of 2009.

And on the fun side, it meant there was more time for murder. To keep the Quorns entertained (and perhaps take their minds off the Atlantic swell), a rather lengthy (and bloody) game of *Cluedo* has been played out aboard the warship.

Reserves go down a storm

GREEN berets celebrated the opening of their newest unit as green berets typically celebrate: with a bit of blood and thunder.

Commandos from the Royal Marines Reserves detachment at Hartlepool 'stormed' HMS Mersey when the fishery ship dropped in on the port.

Hartlepool's RMR unit was formally stood up in June and officially opened at the end of October by Cdre Chris Steele, Commander Maritime Reserves.

The Corps has pumped £140,000 into turning part of the town's TA base in Easington Road into a green beret enclave.

The reservist Royals, who come under the direction of RMR Tyne two dozen miles up the east coast, have been provided with classrooms, mess, offices, bar and store, initially with rope assault course and gym being added shortly.

The aim is for up to 30 green berets to serve at the unit, drawing not just from Hartlepool but also nearby Middlesbrough, Darlington and other towns around Teeside, sparing them a journey to Newcastle or Leeds – the nearest RMR units.



There is lightness...

BLANKETED in snow, this appropriately festive sight is the forecandle of Her Majesty's Ship Gloucester caught in a flurry off South Georgia.

The Fighting G left the warmth (we use the term loosely) of the Falklands War and headed south to the paradisaal archipelago of South Georgia.

The Portsmouth-based Type 42 destroyer sailed past wary groups of king penguins and sleepy elephant seals to anchor off Grytviken (54°17'S, 36°30'W for the record) and take part in exercises with the (not very numerous) local populace.

The ship's company helped scientists assess glacial retreat and environmental changes,

offered advice on locating Improvised Explosive Devices left over from the Falklands War and planned military exercises with the South Georgia government.

The primary focus of the visit by Gloucester and her supporting tanker RFA Gold Rover was to demonstrate the ability to rapidly deploy a joint task force anywhere within the British territories.

The visit to Grytviken coincided with Remembrance Day – and a service in the rare surroundings of the Norwegian Whalers' Church.

The service, led by Gloucester's 'bish' the Rev Mike Wagstaff RN, was attended by Air Cdre Gordon Moulds, Commander

British Forces South Atlantic Islands, and Gloucester's CO Cdr Iain Lower – both of whom laid wreaths on behalf of British Forces in the region – RFA Gold Rover's CO Capt Paul Minter and the government officer for South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, Pat Lurcock, and a smattering of locals, plus sailors from the two ships.

Gloucester's LET Clutterbuck provided the music, courtesy of the 96-year-old church's organ. The noise emanating from said instrument – and church bells – drew local parishioners out of their homes (the whalers left South Georgia nearly half a century ago), as the worshippers found upon exiting the building.

...and there is dark

RIGHT, we'll get the obvious one out of the way first.

A century after one sailor carved his name in immortality on the frozen wastes, there's a new Scott of the Antarctic.

HMS Scott has left these shores for terra nova – taking the place of the RN's usual ice survey ship HMS Endurance which is awaiting repairs following a nearly-cataclysmic flooding incident last December.

Scott's mission, like Endurance, is to support the British Antarctic Survey's work around the frozen continent and gather data on the southern ocean – which is becoming increasingly busy thanks to 'eco tourism'. She's also conducting survey work on the way down south.

Endurance's loss is Scott's gain. It's the first time Scott's sonar suite has been used around Antarctica, so it should throw up some fresh insight into what lurks beneath the waves.

"It's a rare opportunity to make a difference in this far-flung part of the world – and we're very excited about it," enthused Lt Cdr Phil Harper, Scott's Executive Officer.

"We'll help to ensure that the frozen continent remains unspoiled, something which is particularly important in this 50th anniversary year of the Antarctic Treaty."

That treaty determined that no one nation would dominate Antarctica and banned any form of military activity.

Scott's day job is to ensure the underwater 'highways' are safe to navigate for the Silent Service as well as collecting general oceanographic data.

The ship has recently completed a ten-month refit in Portsmouth followed by trials, work-up and finally the hydrographic squadron's version of FOST, HOST (Hydrographic Operational Sea Training) to prepare for the challenges of a difficult deployment.

As she's our sole deep-water ocean

survey vessel (and the RN's sixth-largest vessel, but with a crew of just 52) her kit's rather different from the rest of the squadron.

"Survey recorders new to the ship need to forget everything they have learned about conventional hydrographic surveying and be prepared for a world of computer monitors and plotters," explained Lt Cdr Harper.

"It also comes as quite a shock to them to learn that survey lines can be up to 400 miles long."

All raw bathymetric data – the measurement of the water's depth – is processed using the CARIS survey processing system to ensure it is accurate and clear.

Scott can also trail a 'moving vessel profiler multi-sensor towed array system' (apparently it's the CO's 'pride and joy') which can analyse all manner of oceanographic variables from salinity to sound speed through the water.



Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Hooper, FRPU West

Cornwall in liner sight

THEY have a 24-hour restaurant (plus three other eateries), eight bars, one theatre, a luxury spa, a nursery, two swimming pools and a gym.

But the 1,800 passengers on Ocean Village Two don't have the world's fastest helicopter armed to the teeth.

So it was that Rattler, HMS Cornwall's Lynx, roared past the 70,000-tonne cruise ship as holidaymakers were tucking into their bacon and eggs.

The helicopter – and its mother ship – escorted the British liner through the Gulf of Aden as part of the RN's mission to safeguard shipping.

Despite precautions taken by Ocean Village Two to protect herself through the invisible 'security corridor' in the Gulf of Aden, Cornwall provided that extra level of assurance.

Around 1,000 passengers gathered on the top deck of the cruise ship to show their appreciation. With camera flashes in abundance, the tourists were treated to a fly past from Rattler.

The waves and cheers from the passengers said it all, with one happy cruiser even posting an internet blog about his experience, writing that Cornwall's visit had made his cruise all the more special.

"There's nothing like the sight of one of Her Majesty's warships just off to starboard to help you feel safe," said the frigate's CO Cdr Johnny Ley.

"Providing this kind of maritime security is all in a day's work. Passengers of Ocean Village Two got to see first-hand what the Royal Navy is for and what we do on their behalf every day of the year."

Throughout her time east of Suez, the Fighting 99 has served as flagship of NATO's Standing Maritime Group 2, headed by the RN's Cdre Steve Chick and his staff.

They have directed NATO's Ocean Shield anti-piracy mission for the past six months.

Cornwall is now done in the Gulf of Aden; Group 2 has handed Ocean Shield duties to its sister formation (cunningly called Group 1...) and F99 is due home in Devonport by Christmas.

Fancy meeting you here...

AS PART of her Operational Sea Training package, HMS York paid a (mock) defence diplomacy visit to Dartmouth.

The harbourmaster had the unenviable task of bringing the York into the River Dart, turning her around and seeing her moored between two buoys... all at dusk.

York played host to officer cadets from the college, giving many of them their first taste of a warship.

York's Commanding Officer Cdr Simon Staley held a lunch party for local dignitaries, including BRNC's CO Cdre Jake Moores and Cdre Jamie Miller, Regional Commander for Wales and Western England.

An official reception was combined with a resource and capability demonstration which gave York a chance to show off her abilities other than the fighting capability, including disaster relief operations, providing medical facilities and dealing with chemical spills.

The final day in Dartmouth saw the ship open to visit (via boat transfer). Some 450 people took advantage of the invitation, among them one Martin Johnson.

That's England's World Cup-winning rugby star Martin Johnson, the team's head coach.

He was visiting the town with his family for the weekend and was spotted ashore – and invited aboard – by the York's Executive Officer, Lt Cdr Vince Noyce.

York has now completed OST and should be deploying to the South Atlantic right about now, taking over from her sister HMS Gloucester.



Efficient 824 honoured

THIS rather impressive trophy – the Rolls-Royce Engineering Efficiency Award – sits proudly in the trophy cabinet of 824 Naval Air Squadron after the Merlin unit was rewarded for its effort these past 12 months.

The aviation firm presents the trophy annually to the Fleet Air Arm unit which demonstrates outstanding efficiency when it comes to maintenance and serviceability.

To that end, in this 100th year of Naval aviation, 824 NAS provided four Merlins to support Fly Navy 100 events – including the fly pasts at Greenwich in May, Buckingham Palace in June and the Liverpool in October (see pages 20-21).

The highlight of the squadron's display program came at the Royal International Air Tattoo, where the RN's 'Balbo' formation – led by four 824 NAS Merlins – won the 'best flying display' title, despite very demanding engineering challenges over that weekend.

When not performing for the public, the Culdrose-based squadron has been supporting two Submarine Command Courses (sending its Merlins to hunt for boats driven by potential submarine COs), taking part in two Joint Warrior exercises off Scotland, and completing two Operational Flying Training embarkations with RFA Argus and HMS Illustrious.

That allowed the squadron to transfer 37 fully-trained aircrew to the front line and qualify 89 engineers for operations.

Rolls-Royce's Director Production and Programmes, Simon Baldwin, presented the trophy to 824's outgoing CO Cdr Colin Miller.

The presentation was a fitting end to Cdr Miller's command of the squadron. His engineers, led by CPOAEM(R) John Gillan, thanked his efforts in charge and presented the experienced aviator with a framed print, leather drinks holder and a bottle of his favourite whiskey.

Winter shows

THE Bands of HM Royal Marines are performing a series of 'themed concerts' at St Mary's Church in Fratton, Portsmouth, to keep people entertained over the winter.

There will be one performance a month between now and March either by the Portsmouth or the newly-formed Collingwood band.

December 17 sees the RM School of Music Christmas concert; 2010 opens with the New Year concert on January 14; the Age of Flight is celebrated in musical form on February 25; the series ends on March 25 with music through the ages.

Tickets, priced £6 for adults, £5 for concessions and £3 for children, are available on 02392 726182.



Picture: Lt Cdr Peter Pipkin, HMS Kent

From dealers of death ...to savers of life

FOUR-FIVE, engage!

Quite possibly the favourite instruction of any surface ship commanding officer.

The man giving the order? Cdr Simon Hopper. The ship? HMS Kent. The location? The Gulf.

With her duties protecting Iraq's oil platforms and providing stability at the tip of the Arabian Gulf done, the ship decided to refresh her gunnery skills.

As the bulk of the past six months have been devoted to peace – maritime security operations to be precise – rather than war, the practice shoot allowed the gunnery teams to rehearse and refine their procedures as well as prove that the weapons function correctly.

It wasn't just the 4.5in main gun fired up for the 'gunex'; Kent's 30mm close-range guns also shot

off plenty of rounds.

The former is typically used to provide support for troops ashore; the latter forms part of the Type 23's defences against incoming attack in the air or on the surface.

Kent's now making her way home to Portsmouth with her duties in the northern Gulf being taken up by her sister, HMS Monmouth (see below).

That passage home was dramatically interrupted by a rescue when a sailor was plucked from Gulf waters.

The seaman was reported to have fallen overboard the Cypriot-registered merchant vessel MV Peter Paul in the darkness.

Kent was some 150 miles away at the time, but headed for the sailor's last reported position and, at first light, launched her Lynx.

After an hour's search pilot

Lt Gary McCall spied the stricken mariner before observer Lt Joe Keane lowered winchman AET Mike Purcell to pluck the sailor out of the sea. The Lynx then landed the exhausted man on the American destroyer USS Benfold for medical treatment.

"We train for incidents like this all the time – thankfully rarely having to do it for real," said AET Purcell.

"The training paid off today, saving the life of another sailor and highlighting the importance of being able to respond to such incidents at the drop of a hat."

The merchant sailor, one of the Peter Paul's engineers, was checked over by American medics, found to be fit and well and returned to his ship.

Black Duke and black puddings

KENT'S place in the Gulf has been filled by the Black Duke, which knuckled down to the task in hand by getting to know a veteran of the region.

France's La Fayette has spent the past five months patrolling these waters – and shared her experiences with HMS Monmouth courtesy of a 'cross-pol' as the two ships exchanged sailors.

Seven matelots and sept, er, matelots traded places for a morning... just in time for breakfast.

The French received a 'traditional English' with obligatory black pudding...

...and the Brits sampled a *petit déjeuner* of cheeses, hams and delights from the onboard *boulangerie* (bakery).

Both parties were then taken on guided tours of the ships with visits to the bridge, galley, operations room and aviation facilities before returning to their parent ships.

"We were extremely well hosted by the French and they put on an awesome breakfast for us. La Fayette was very modern and the ship's company were very dedicated," said Capt Chris Armstrong RM, in charge of Monmouth's commando detachment and one of the seven invitees to the French frigate.

The evening before the 'cross-pol', La Fayette and the Black Duke staged a mock surface engagement to test the strengths of the opposing sides.

Monmouth fared well against the stealthy French frigate and both sides agreed that it was an excellent training

opportunity – something hard to come by on an operational deployment.

On her way to the Gulf, Monmouth paid a three-day visit to Alexandria.

The first duty was to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Sailor. CO Cdr Anthony Long and a Ceremonial Guard of Honour attended the ceremony at the eternal flame at the memorial on the waterfront.

The visit included a number of VIP engagements and receptions to inform locals about the RN, while a good proportion of the ship's company headed to Giza to see the Pyramids and Sphinx.

Once through Suez, Monmouth joined in the anti-piracy mission off Somalia monitoring activity to build up a 'pattern of life' for intelligence experts to analyse.

She picked up an SOS from a yacht in the Gulf of Aden – not being attacked by pirates, but taking on copious amounts of water.

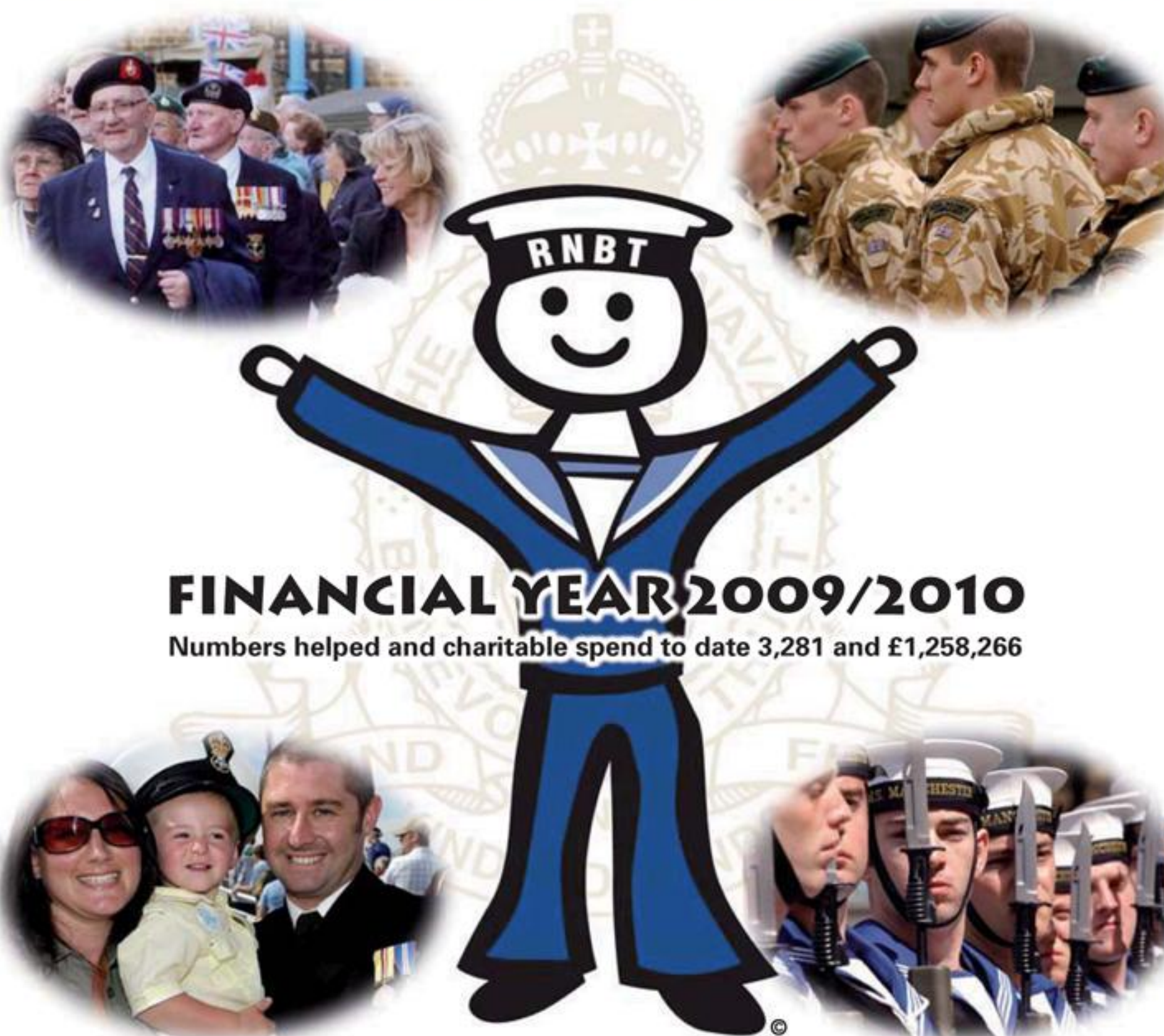
Monmouth was 200 miles away at the time, but put her foot down and, as she closed in on the troubled yacht's last reported position, launched her Merlin, codename Blackbird.

The helicopter soon found the yacht, which had beached and although the flooding had been stopped by her crew, the water had damaged all radio comms.

Once the Black Dukes were happy that the boat was ok and had alerted the relevant authorities, their frigate continued on its way.

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Fort for good

AFTER sailing more than 28,000 nautical miles, visiting ten nations, replenishing ships from the British, Dutch, US and Australian navies on 15 occasions and, above all, helping to snare £240m of drugs, RFA Fort George is home in the UK.

The one-stop supply ship spent the latter stages of her five-month Caribbean deployment as the partner in crimefighting of HMS Iron Duke – a marriage which reached its climax with the seizure of five and a half tonnes of cocaine off the South American coast.

In addition, the ship visited several overseas territories including Anguilla, the Turks and Caicos islands and Montserrat, where training and exercises were carried out with local emergency services so they could cope with natural disasters. Fortunately, the 2009 hurricane season proved to be a relatively quiet one with only 'Bill' briefly posing a serious threat; thankfully it passed the islands.

Now back in home waters, Fort George is being kept busy with exercises with the RN, most notably with the FOST team off Plymouth.

She hooked up with HMS Daring for a double replenishment at sea – a simultaneous stores and fuel transfer; it's believed to be the first time this has been done with a Type 45 destroyer.

Albion tastes a little Belgium

ASSAULT ship HMS Albion took a break from work-up following her refit to spend a weekend in Belgium.

The port of Zeebrugge provided the backdrop for the four-day visit with a mixture of official duties to perform (such as a reception for Belgian bigwigs) and numerous sporting fixtures.

For Albion's CO Capt John Kingwell, this short hop across the Channel was a bit of a homecoming.

Just three miles down the coast from Zeebrugge lies the small resort of Blankenberge.

Capt Kingwell's mother was born in the town; his Belgian grandfather, who fled to the UK in 1940 when the Germans invaded his country, was the first Allied soldier to liberate Blankenberge in the autumn of 1944; and his great-grandmother was arrested for helping downed British airmen evade the Nazis during the German occupation.

The Devonport-based assault ship is due to resume the mantle of amphibious flagship from her sister Bulwark next month.



picture: la(phot) james crawford, frpu west

End to Trafalgar knights

THIS is almost the last act in the proud career of HMS Trafalgar.

After 26 years' service, the first of Britain's T-boats sails under her own steam for the final time as she makes her last entry to Devonport.

The hunter-killer trailed a 120-foot decommissioning pennant from her fin as she sailed up the Hamoaze, past the rare sight of HMS Ark Royal (typically found 180 miles to the east in Pompey).

A Merlin from Culdrose, tugs blasting their water cannons, MOD police boats and a flotilla of small craft greeted the nuclear submarine to bid her farewell.

The final entry was the first part in a two-act send-off for the submarine which gave her name to a class of boats.

Trafalgar formally leaves the Service

on December 4 with a decommissioning ceremony in Devonport attended by many of the men who have served in her down the years, as well as dignitaries from her affiliated town of Morecambe and the lady who has followed her career avidly since launching the boat in July 1981: Lady Fieldhouse.

The boat and her six sisters were built at the height of the Cold War with the aim of protecting the Fleet from enemy boats – and hunting/killing enemy ballistic missile submarines (hence the hunter-killer tag, more accurately 'attack submarines').

With the Cold War now history, that role has evolved; there's still the hunting/killing, but also intelligence gathering and

launching cruise missile strikes.

That HMS Trafalgar did. She was the first British nuclear submarine to launch a Tomahawk missile; she also targeted Taliban strongpoints during the 2001-02 campaign to drive them out of Afghanistan.

More recently, the boat took part in Joint Warrior war games off Scotland, hosted potential submarine commanders on the legendary (and fearsome) Perisher course, and beat the French (as befits her name)... at football.

"The feeling of everyone on board – including me – as we came in for the final time was a mixture of pride and sorrow," said CO Cdr Charlie Shepherd, who's been in charge of Trafalgar for the past two and a half years.

"There's sadness because this is the last time Trafalgar will be operational and some submariners have been on board for up to seven years.

"Close-knit submarines are almost families and this community will be broken up.

"But there's pride because of the fantastic work Trafalgar has done over 26 years. Most of all I'm very proud of my ship's company. They've been resilient, cheerful and hard working right to the end. They, like the submarine, are a credit to the Royal Navy."

Post de-commissioning on December 4, some of the ship's company will remain to help with the boat's wind-down, the rest will be spread among the remaining T-boat fleet or join the second of Trafalgar's successors, HMS Ambush (see opposite for news of the first A-boat's maiden voyage).



Royals' fin-tastic voyage

THESE chaps are Royal Marines – men of 539 Assault Squadron to be precise.

Their steed is Her Majesty's Submarine Sceptre.

The two joined forces off the South Coast to practise one of the 'darker arts' of submarine warfare: stealthy insertion.

It's something the Silent Service has done pretty much since its inception – but not necessarily like this.

The Royals arrived by RAF Hercules, parachuting out of the transport aircraft and landing in the briny, where the very last of Britain's Swiftsure boats was waiting for them.

The weather was suitably calm for the green berets from Turnchapel to carry out that rarest of manoeuvres – a 'fin top recovery', which involves the commandos occupying the fin with the boat dived (hence the photograph...).

Such exercises are heavily

reliant on joint co-operation (aside from 539, Sceptre and the RAF, FOST Submarines were very much involved) as well as the British weather.

Thankfully, everything clicked into place for two days of top-notch training which proved extremely useful for deeps and commandos alike.

"This type of valuable training is something that we do not get to do that often," said Sceptre's CO Cdr Steve Waller.

"For some, it's easy to forget

how potent and versatile an SSN can be. It's important that we practise the wide range of skills and abilities that we can bring to the battle."

Sceptre has spent much of 2009 in UK waters on work-up (which saw her target HMS Daring), as well as conducting weapons testing and calibration trials, but has now headed off for six months on a 'rest of the world' (ROW) deployment.

The oldest active warship in Britain's arsenal, the hunter-killer is due to pay off towards the end of 2010, by which time she'll have served her nation for 32 years.



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Roll out of Barrow



● HMS Astute makes her way from Barrow to Faslane on her first voyage – and the first phase of sea trials
Picture: LA(Phot) JJ Massey

THEY have waited a long time, but at last the crew of the Navy's most powerful Fleet submarine have their hands on the controls, writes Mike Gray.

And very different controls they are, too – the world of the deeps has been brought very much into the 21st century with HMS Astute.

Her keel was laid down in January 2001 – or, at least, a massive steel ring was unveiled to the media and assorted dignitaries and guests in the cavernous Devonshire Dock Hall in Barrow, submarine-builder to the nation for more than 100 years.

The hall was pretty empty then, but as BAE Systems Submarine Solutions picked up the traces which had been cast aside with the HMS Vengeance, the last of the

Trident boats, the massive facility swung back into action.

As Astute took shape – as the giant rings were welded together and massive modules, assembled elsewhere on site, were slotted into her pressure hull – designers and workers alike took the opportunity to innovate.

The building process was refined as lessons were learnt and old dogs picked up new tricks.

And technological advances meant Astute would be a world leader when she finally nosed through the narrow channel out of Ramsden Dock and into the open sea.

Her reactor will not need to be refuelled during her projected lifetime; periscopes are now electronic requiring no hull-piercing tubes; and for the first time in a Fleet submarine there will be no need for 'hot bunking', where there are not enough

spaces on board for every member of the crew.

We will take a closer look at life on board Astute next month, and for the old and bold submariners it will come as something of a revelation.

The boat is considerably larger than the S- and T-boats she is designed to replace – though a lot of the nooks and crannies have been filled with new kit, so there is not the sense of spaciousness that her dimensions might suggest.

It is more than two years since Astute was slowly wheeled out from her birthplace, shrouded in dry ice and surrounded by flashing lights on a sunny June day.

It was a very different scene when a select group of journalists was invited on board just days



before she sailed on her maiden voyage.

Squeezing past sailors who were busy storing ships (it would appear a box of Magnums had come to grief as everybody was enjoying an ice cream, despite the deteriorating weather outside) it was clear that some aspects of Astute were still very much traditional Silent Service.

Droll comments and deadpan faces are common currency in Her Majesty's submarines, but those escorting us around made it clear that there is a sense of pride in being the team which brings Astute into the Fleet.

That sense of pride was summed up by her Commanding Officer, Cdr Andy Coles, who said: "I

think a lot of people would want my job today.

"I didn't think it would be possible to beat taking Turbulent around the world – and on five operational patrols.

"But taking Astute to sea – the first of class – is a lovely feeling."

There is plenty of work to do on the boat before she can take her place on an unseen front line somewhere in the world's oceans.

An intensive programme of sea trials lies ahead, a programme which began as she made the short trip north on the surface from Barrow to her new home at Clyde Naval Base, where she received an enthusiastic welcome on a grey, rainy Friday.

Not only will her hull, her systems and her sensors be fully tested, but the crew will be responsible for writing her 'owner's manual' – they will set the pattern

for operating the class for the next two decades and more.

But for now it is a question of settling in and enjoying life on a shiny new boat – though with dozens of technicians on board monitoring her progress, as well as RN sea riders, her normal complement of around 100 has swollen to a cosy 135.

"Astute represents the sum of thousands of individual efforts, and everyone involved in her creation can be proud," said Rear Admiral Simon Lister, Director Submarines for Defence Equipment and Support.

"Submarine building combines a huge variety of elements.

"Sometimes it is more like blacksmithing manipulating the steel of the hull, and sometimes it is like brain surgery, dealing with advanced technology and performing tasks to an almost unbelievable level of accuracy."



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A first for freedom

COLOURS flying, the sailors of HMS Portland prepare to march through the streets of Weymouth for the very first time.

And fittingly, the frigate men and women began their inaugural freedom parade a stone's throw from the remembrance garden which honours those who gave their lives for our freedom.

Although the Type 23 has been around for nearly a decade, it was only in February 2008 that the people of Weymouth and Portland bestowed their highest honour on the ship...

... and it was only as 2009 waned, thanks to the Devonport warship's demanding commitments, that the Portlanders were able to accept the honour; the frigate spent the tail end of 2008 and the first half of 2009 on anti-piracy duties east of Suez.

The ship's company marched along Weymouth Esplanade to exercise their newly-gained freedom (pictured right) with music provided by the Band of the Adjutant General's Corps.

They ended at the Pavilion Theatre, where locals had arranged a reception.

"To be granted freedom of the city or borough is a big thing for any military unit," said Portland's CO Cdr Tim Henry.

"This is a big thing for any military formed unit. It's recognition that we've been accepted and welcomed by the borough and the people of Weymouth and Portland and we're very much a part of this place now."

In return for their supreme civic honour, the ship presented the borough with a framed Battle Ensign, flown while the frigate conducted anti-piracy



operations earlier this year.

The ship spent five days in Portland – enough time for her to host local bigwigs and movers and shakers at a reception, for her ship's company to stage a capability demonstration, and to join in celebrations to mark the 1,000-day countdown to the start of the 2012 Olympics (elements of which will be held in Portland Harbour).

In the middle of those five days in Portland, the ship cast off and spent a day at sea, giving guests an insight into what

she does – aided by a Tornado from her affiliate RAF unit, 617 Sqn (of Dambusters fame).

Back alongside, the gangway was opened to 700 visitors for an afternoon (not all at once), while the ship's rugby union side locked horns with Weymouth's 3rd XV, notching up a 29-22 victory.

Before heading for Dorset, the Type 23 could be found off the Hebrides.

And found she was... by HMS Trafalgar.

The two sparred during Joint Warrior war games. Trafalgar hunted Portland... and vice versa.

It wasn't necessarily a fair fight as other Allied warships also joined in the hunt for the T-boat, performing her last operational service for the nation before paying off (see page 6).

As Joint Warrior came to a close, there was the small matter of hosting the First Sea Lord – and his boss – for Portland.

Royal Marines delivered Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope and Secretary of State for Defence Bob Ainsworth in a patrol craft.

Both guests were given a whistle-stop tour of the frigate by Portland's ship's company, who described their deeds during their recent deployment east of Suez chasing pirates.

The command team briefed Admiral Stanhope and Mr Ainsworth in greater detail on Portland's anti-piracy/counter-narcotics mission in the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden, and the Defence Secretary thanked the ship's company for their continuing efforts to keep the sea lanes open.

After that a Search and Rescue Sea King from HMS Gannet whisked the two guests back to Prestwick and dry land.

The ship is now home in Devonport for a spell of maintenance and upgrades ahead of Operational Sea Training with FOST in the new year, then deployment.

Pictures: LA(Phot) Caroline Davies, FRPU East

Rs of fun for Royal

ROYAL Marine Commandos in 11 (Amphibious Trials and Training) Squadron in Instow are putting the Corps' next-generation hovercraft through its paces in the Bristol Channel.

The Landing Craft Air Cushion Light Replacement – more commonly known by Royals as LCAC (L)(R) – is a successor to the LCAC (L), currently in service with 539 Assault Squadron RM.

First impressions of the Instow team are that the new hovercraft is faster and more manoeuvrable than its predecessor; it can reach 45kts – a considerable increase on the old (L) models.

The new hovercraft is intended to carry 16 fully-equipped green berets into battle over water, ice, mud, marshland and beach.

It has vastly-improved navigational kit, helping the two crew to operate much better at night and in poor visibility, and the cabin has enhanced protection against bullet strikes.

A night which will Nott be repeated...

GATHERED on the forecandle of HMS Nottingham are the destroyer's former commanding officers – plus Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach, whose wife launched her in Southampton on a February day in 1980, and chaplain the Rev Janice Pettipher for a final Trafalgar Night dinner.

Sir Henry and his daughter, Henrietta Wood who took over the role of ship's sponsor when Lady Leach died, were guests of honour.

They dined alongside the remaining officers serving with Nottingham; the Type 42 is in a low state of readiness as her 150 or so remaining ship's company de-store the destroyer, preparing for the decommissioning in Portsmouth Naval Base on February 27.

Former ship's company who wish to attend the ceremony should see RNTM 219/09.

Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU East



Gannet team singled out by CINC Fleet

NORMALLY, it's an individual who receives a commendation from the Commander-in-Chief Fleet.

But after two years breaking all records saving lives, the RN's second ranking sailor singled out HMS Gannet for their continuing efforts – and not just in Search and Rescue.

The 98,000 square miles of land and sea which is Gannet's domain is the largest covered by any rescue unit (and 12 times the size of Wales apparently).

The Prestwick-based fliers were called out 359 times in 2007, helping 349 people in the process.

That record-breaking year was followed by another. In 2008, the Sea Kings were scrambled 382 times, providing assistance to 347 in doing so.

On top of that, like its SAR counterpart 771 NAS in Culdrose, Gannet has taken on an increasing role supporting front-line duties, such as the defence of the Clyde. Last year the unit hosted 15 detachments of other units and carried out 140 operational sorties. Oh, and Gannet somehow managed to find time to host more than 500 Sea Cadets and raise thousands of pounds for local charities.

And so it was that Admiral Sir Trevor Soar decided Team Gannet – 40 RN and 70 civilian personnel – deserved particular recognition with his commendation.

"The achievements of a unit with such a small footprint are a true testament to the professionalism, dedication and commitment of everyone in the team," Admiral Soar said.

Gannet's CO Lt Cdr Bryan Nicholas said the commendation showed the efforts made by his "superb team" were "recognised in wider Royal Navy circles".

He continued: "Personally, I'm incredibly proud of this award. All the staff at the unit – each and every one of them – should feel equally proud."

"This is very rare indeed and an absolute credit to all the hard work that every single person here at Gannet has put in. I congratulate and thank them all."

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Show us your tiffs

AFTER 141 years the days of the artificer are almost done as the very last tiffs prepare to pass out of HMS Sultan.

Ceremonial divisions at the Gosport establishment on February 12 will see the final Marine Engineering Artificer Qualifying Course formally complete their training.

Although the rank disappears – the dictionary describes 'artificer' as an archaic noun – the skills of 'tiffs' or 'tiffies' now fall under the banner of engineering technicians (ME for marine engineering, WE for weapons engineering).

Tiffs trace their heritage back to Engine Room Artificers, introduced to the RN in 1868 to take into account the Senior Service's transition from sail to steam.

The branch was given added impetus by Jacky Fisher in 1903; perturbed that the RN might be surpassed technologically by other navies, especially the Germans, the First Sea Lord introduced training for boy artificers which would be "second to none" at Chatham, Plymouth and Portsmouth, the latter housed in a collection of Victorian hulks in the harbour – HMS Fisgard.

In the '30s training was transferred to Chatham and Torpoint with the later addition of HMS Caledonia at Rosyth. Each year 15-year-olds were selected by examination to join up in the engine room, electrical or ordnance – and from 1938, air – categories.

In September 1983 artificer classes marched into HMS Sultan, Collingwood and Daedalus for their training and in 1985, Caledonia became a satellite unit of the fleet accommodation centre HMS Cochrane.

"Who were the artificers of the Royal Navy who did their apprenticeships at HMS Fisgard, Caledonia, Collingwood, Daedalus and Sultan?" Sultan's Lt Paul Atkins ponders wistfully.

"They were the men who kept the engines turning, the guns firing, the ships floating, the electrical equipment working and the aircraft flying."

He continues: "They repaired and maintained all the equipment on His or Her Majesty's ships wherever they were in the world. If a spare part could not be found they were expected to manufacture one from whatever was available on the ship."

"This may have been done during a battle at sea or – some would say even worse – during exercises, with chiefs and officers shouting orders at them."

Sultan is extending an invitation to all former marine engineering artificers to mark the historic occasion; there will be a chance to catch up with old oppos as well as see some of the training given to today's successor branch. Details from Lt Atkins on 023 9254 2989 or ocmmesm@nrtta.mod.uk

YES, it's a Merlin. A Crab Merlin.

So what's it doing in these pages?

Ah well, light blue though it is (*looks green to me – Ed*), it wouldn't be flying without a little help from chaps and chapesses in dark blue.

If you cast your mind back to July, you might remember an article about the crucial contribution made by RN aviators and ground crew to Merlin operations in Iraq.

Now they've come to a close, the Merlins are being committed to Afghanistan – and again Naval personnel are playing a key role.

The helicopters and their air and ground crews were dispatched to El Centro Naval Air Facility in southern California, a dozen miles north of the Mexican border, for pre-deployment training.

The US air base and environs replicate conditions in Afghanistan to some degree; it's hot and dusty. It's not high, however, unlike Helmand.

It took C17 Globemasters (they carry a payload more than three times that of a Hercules) to ferry four helicopters to the USA for the four-month Exercise Merlin Vortex, commanded by Lt Cdr Neil 'Charlie' Parrock.

It was his task to ensure that some 450 personnel from the three Services, including 40 aircrews, received at least four weeks of training, including the art of using night vision goggles over the desert.

"El Centro is almost identical in terrain and climate to what we'll experience in Afghanistan," said Lt Cdr Parrock.

"There is no way we can send people there without this training. The terrain is mountainous and hotter than Iraq, and the aircraft are operating at the edges of their envelope."

The RAF operate the Mk3 version of the Merlin – fundamentally the same aircraft as the RN's Mk1, except that all the submarine hunting wizardry in the back of the cab is replaced by space for up to 20 troops in full kit.

On top of that, like the Fleet Air Arm Sea Kings which have already deployed to Afghanistan, the Merlins went through upgrades, £45m worth to be precise, which included the fitting of special rotor blades to cope with 'hot and high' and a new defensive aids suite.

"Afghanistan presents the most challenging flying environment for helicopters in the world: the high altitude, temperatures that soar to 50°C by day – and rarely below 35°C at night during the summer," said Rear Admiral Tony Johnstone-Burt, Commander Joint Helicopter Force. "It tests aircraft to the limit."

With Merlin Vortex done, the first helicopters have begun arriving in theatre.

Picture: RAF Mobile News Team

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Solving mystery of the last patrol

THIS is the first sight of Her Majesty's Submarine E18 in nearly a century after a ten-year search for her wreck paid off.

The boat disappeared while on patrol in the Baltic in May 1916 – taking all 33 crew with her.

She had been attached to a squadron of boats dispatched to the Baltic to wage war against the German effort at sea...

...which the half a dozen boats did from the autumn of 1915 until Russia's withdrawal from the war in late 1917.

By then, E18 had been missing for nearly 18 months, however. She left her base at Reval – today Tallinn – in Estonia (then part of the Russian Empire) with a flurry of British submarines in late May 1916.

Her CO Lt Cdr Robert Crosby Halahan was an unusual character. Embracing the white heat of new technology at the beginning of the 20th Century, he volunteered for submarines (he also learned to fly).

To his crew's chagrin, he refused to use the boat's heads and insisted on surfacing each morning to perform his bodily functions over the side – which almost resulted in the submarine being sunk when caught by surprise by a Zeppelin.

Halahan was also unusually superstitious. When dispatched to the Baltic he took a last look at the shores of his mother country, never expecting to see it again, while an Estonian fortune teller predicted he was "in grave danger" shortly before he departed on his final patrol.

Yet he was also a skilful submarine commander. He blew the bow off a German destroyer, V100, on May 26 (she would have sunk had the weather not been so clement) and continued to seek out targets – E18 was twice sighted by the Germans on the surface of the Baltic, the last time on the mid-afternoon of June 1. Thereafter no trace of her has ever been found – until now.

Her fate captured the imaginations of Swedish historian and explorer Carl Douglas and Australian Darren Brown, great-grandson of one of E18's crew – who missed her final patrol through illness and was haunted by the fate of his shipmates for the rest of his life.

"Finding the answer to what happened became my quest," said Mr Brown, who promptly spent years ploughing through British, German, Russian and Estonian archives trying to piece together E18's final patrol.

Armed with all the latest research, the Swedish survey vessel MV Triad began searching the waters off the island of Hiiumaa.

It was there that the boat's side-scan sonar picked up a contact on the seabed in waters known to have been heavily mined during the Great War.

A robot submarine was sent down for further inspection and brought back haunting images which historians determined were of an E-boat.

"It's the fruition of nearly a decade of work – a very emotional discovery for me and the search team," said Mr Douglas.

"It's been one of the top three wrecks we wanted to find."

It's thought the boat fell victim either to a mine or was sunk by gunfire from German surface forces. Either way, 30 Britons and three Russian sailors serving aboard as liaison officers were killed, including the fatalistic Halahan.

The whole saga is being recounted in a forthcoming documentary, Churchill's Lost Submarine; you can watch extracts from it at www.youtube.com/user/DeepSeaProd



● Some of the junior restaurant show plates prepared by RN chefs at the Culinary Challenge

Plate class

THE ninth Combined Services Culinary Challenge staged at Sandown Park Exhibition Centre in Surrey saw three days of top 'cheffery' (*made-up word – Ed*) and stewarding from the three Services – and the best RN result since 2001.

The contest is the flagship event in the Forces culinary world, aimed at raising the bar when it comes to catering personnel, nurturing pride in professional achievement, fostering team spirit – and rewarding the best.

A 75-strong RN culinary arts team formed up at HMS Nelson – comprising chefs and stewards from the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Fleet Auxiliary as well as civilians from support firms Aramark and Sodexo – to hone their skills before making the relatively short trip up the A3 to Esher.

Awards were issued based on creativity, workmanship, composition and presentation (including taste) with the judges' scores determining what, if any, gong should be given: a 90 per cent score was needed for gold, 75 for silver, 65 for bronze, 55 for a certificate of merit.

Aside from the small matter of expert judging, there were the added pressures of time constraints and a live audience.

And to that end, the judges presented an impressive 83 awards to the RN team: six 'best in class', seven gold, 22 silver, 23 bronze and 25 certificates of merit.

Highlights of the contest included

(deep breath) the nail-biting 17 individual events held in the practical theatre; the Parade de Chef, where a team of three chefs creates a two-course meal for 64 VIPs; the Military Grand Prix – a team of three chefs preparing, cooking and serving a two-course meal for 14 using a

mystery box of ingredients; the

field team challenge – three

Royal Marines chefs

produce a two-course

meal for 20 using the

ten-man ration packs;

the display salon

featured decorative

cakes, sculptured fat

carvings, show platters and team

buffets; and in the stewards arena,

stewarding skills were put to the test.

Navy team captain, Ark Royal's PO Simon Geldart, a veteran of high-end cooking who's worked with Gordon Ramsay and prepared meals for the Queen, walked away with a couple of titles from Sandown Park: most valued team member and senior lamb chef – drawing on his Welsh heritage for the latter.

"I am overwhelmed with excitement about being awarded this prize. I am over the moon," the senior rate said. "I guess cooking quality lamb must be in my blood."

Fleet Catering Officer 1/O Pat Prunty RFA added: "This is a testimony to all those taking part. It was a pleasure seeing the faces of each competitor when they collected their awards at the prize giving ceremony each day."

Despite the record number of successful Senior Service caterers coming home from this year's event, 1/O Prunty and his team are already scouring the RN for next year's contest.

If you are interested in taking part, contact the Naval Service Culinary Arts Team management at Navy Command HQ.

● *Burning ambition... Logs Lizzy Froud (HMS Bulwark) fires her way to bronze in the senior flambe*

Pictures: LA(Phot) Chris Mumby, FRPU East



Is it a bird? Is it a plane?

NO, it's super mess...

The transformation of Faslane continues with the opening of the hub of the redevelopment, a state-of-the-art food-leisure-entertainment-shopping complex.

The super mess, as it is dubbed (the official title is the Neptune Building) has begun serving food, the first part of a phased opening.

Junior rates at HM Naval Base Clyde were the first people to try out the new facilities, sitting down to breakfast on Monday November 16.

A week later, officers took their place in the wardroom part of the complex.

Once fully open, the super mess is intended to meet most of Faslane-based sailors' needs – the ground floor of the building is occupied by a shopping mall (the stores are not yet open but the complex will feature a convenience store and post office, barber and internet café amongst others). There's also a sports bar and bowling alley in the building.

Covered walkways lead off the central building to the new single-living accommodation at Faslane; 1,682 en suite cabins have been provided for Clyde-based sailors of all ranks.

It's part of an eight-year, £125m revamp of the base, the Neptune Regeneration Project.

The task of naming two of the areas in the supermess has fallen to Naval Base workers. Christening the all-ranks facility – a catering area with a bar, dance floor and stage – and the retail mall will follow a competition open to everyone on site.

Reward for refit efforts

THE Superintendent Fleet Maintenance (SFM) Upkeep Team completed a hat-trick of hugely-successful maintenance periods which saw them gain a top award.

During 2009, refit and docking periods for HM Ships Ark Royal, Liverpool and York were all completed on time and on budget.

In recognition of the work done on the latter destroyer, many of the individuals involved – including members of the SFM Upkeep Team plus York's ship's company – were awarded a BAE Chairman's Bronze Award.

David Denmead, SFM project contract manager – and one of the recipients of the award – attributed the success of recent refits in Portsmouth to "the way in which all the disparate groups – BAE, ship's companies, SFM – have mucked in together and got on with the job, even in the face of taut programmes that have really stretched us."

"Take Ark as an example. We weren't originally due to dock her but we ended up doing a complete hull survey, blasting away the whole of the outer bottom to bare metal and applying Intersleek paint. I was on board Ark at sea when the ship got up to 31.5 knots, so it was nice to see the fruits of our labour."

Sample the life O'Brian

LOVERS of the days of sail and the leading fictional chronicler of Nelson's Navy can feed both their passions in Portsmouth next year.

A 'Patrick O'Brian' weekend is being lined up in the historic dockyard to celebrate the late Irish author, his writings and the world he loved so much: the early 19th-Century Royal Navy.

The highlight of the weekend will be a lower gundeck dinner aboard HMS Victory.

There will also be a concert, readings from O'Brian's novels, and lectures by leading naval historians of the period.

The weekend costs £450 (not including accommodation).

Details from Sue Goodger at the Royal Naval Museum on sue.goodger@royalnavalmuseum.org or 023 9272 7583.



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**IF YOU CARE ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS
AND FAMILIES, IT'S TIME TO MAKE
THE POLITICIANS DO THEIR BIT.**



Dear Reader,

Like you, I care deeply about all of you fighting in Afghanistan - and your families here at home.

So much blood has been spilled in that conflict, but you, our professional military, accept the risks, serving with bravery, honour and pride. In return, you and your families deserve to be treated with fairness.

This is the pact of 'blood for treasure' that our fighting personnel have accepted for centuries. You have not spared your blood - now Britain must not spare its treasure. As you and your brothers and sisters at arms face the enemy, you need to know that the Government will support both you and your family left waiting anxiously at home.

The Royal British Legion is campaigning for the next Government to improve the lot of the whole Armed Forces family. Fairer compensation and improved support for the wounded or bereaved is one key demand. The details are all in the Legion's general election manifesto. I support it, and I urge you to support it too, for the sake of you, your families and your friends and colleagues.

Simply sign their online petition and email your election candidates at www.timetodoyourbit.org.uk

Thank you for doing your bit,

General Sir Mike Jackson GCB CBE DSO DL
Chief of the General Staff, 2003-2006

timetodoyourbit.org.uk



SAR performers

SOMETIMES the passage of time negates the meaning of a naval air squadron's motto.

Changing aircraft, changing roles and all that. 845 NAS no longer hears the enemy, for example, it goes hunting him.

And sometimes those mottos are spot on.

Non nobis solum translates rather clunkily as 'not unto us alone' – or in 21st-Century speak: for the greater good.

And that neatly encapsulates the general mission of 771 Naval Air Squadron, saving lives for nearly half a century.

In its current incarnation at RNAS Culdrose – home since 1974 – the squadron and its Sea King Mk5s provides search and rescue cover for the Western Approaches: that's the Cornish peninsula, the Isles of Scilly and the Atlantic/Channel to a distance of 200 nautical miles.

While its sister Fleet Air Arm SAR unit HMS Gannet spends most of its time over land, not sea, 771's domain is the ocean.

That can mean mariners in distress (such as, famously, the Fastnet race of 1979 or the MSC Napoli, almost wrecked by Hurricane Kyrill in January 2007) or holidaymakers, walkers, climbers, divers and surfers in difficulty around the Cornish coast (as seen on the TV series *Seaside Rescue*).

The helicopters are also called upon to ferry patients/injured people to hospital in the West Country.

One 771 cab sits at 15 minutes' notice by day, 45 by night, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with a second on the Culdrose tarmac ready to join it in the skies should the emergency demand.

That demand is rising. With the exception of 2003, never in the past 15 years has the number of search and rescue missions dipped below 200 annual.

The trend is upwards – and 2009 is already the busiest year for rescues since modern records began.

So far, the Sea Kings have been scrambled on 267 occasions this year. In doing so, the Ace of Clubs have saved 244 lives.

SAR is the most visible and high-profile of 771's tasks.

And we mean 'tasks' not 'task', for beyond this the squadron is also required to provide Sea King training for aircrew – either *ab initio* fliers from Shawbury or conversion training from other

aircraft (roughly two-fifths of the 771 team have spent time with the Commando Helicopter Force and its Sea King Mk4s, for example).

In addition, since the beginning of this year, 771 has been asked to aid 849, 854 and 857 Naval Air Squadrons in preparing their fliers for duties in Afghanistan (which has meant training deployments to Norway and Spain *inter alia*).

And if that's not enough, 771 also provides support to maritime counter-terrorism patrols over UK waters, as well as conducting any other general duties Fleet HQ sees fit.

It requires 180 personnel – 32 officers, 132 senior and junior rates and 16 staff from defence support firm Serco – to maintain this punishing sortie schedule. (The Mk5 requires roughly a dozen 'man hours' on the ground for every hour it spends in the skies.)

They've all moved home this year; as part of the redevelopment of some of the aged hangars at Culdrose, the old hangars housing 771 are being pulled down and replaced by 21st-Century structures.

As for 771, well it pre-dates Culdrose by a good eight years – beginning life at HMS Daedalus on the cusp of WW2 as a 'fleet requirement unit'.

That was a function it performed on and off until the mid-50s, both at Lee-on-the-Solent and later at Ford.

It became the first RN squadron to receive helicopters, the Hoverfly in 1945.

After disbanding in 1955 it re-formed in Portland in 1961 as a trials unit for Whirlwinds and Wasps, practising many of the signature manoeuvres of search and rescue in doing so: the free diver drop, hi-line transfers and in-flight refuelling.

When the Whirlwind HAR3 entered service, the squadron became a dedicated search and rescue unit. It relocated to Culdrose in 1974, swapped the Whirlwind first for the Wessex, then the Sea King in 1988.

771's unofficial logo – the Ace of Clubs – is probably more famous than its official badge (three hornets above the waves) and is the last reminder of the days when RN aircraft were adorned with such insignia (806 NAS, for example, were the Ace of Diamonds).



Aircraft: Westland Sea King HU Mk5
Engines: 2 x Rolls-Royce Gnome 1400-1 Turboshafts (generation 1,400 shp apiece)
Rotor Span: 62ft (18.8m)
Length: 57ft 2in (17.4m)
Speed: 125 knots
Crew: 4 (2 x pilot, 1 x observer, 1 x aircrewman)
Endurance: in excess of five hours
Sensors: Search radar transponder IFF and radar altimeter

Facts and figures



picture: po(phot) carl osmond

photographic memories



THE uniforms have changed a tad, but not the occasion. Sailors still stir the pudding at Christmas, although here the men of HMS Tyne do so as much to bolster morale at home as aboard the destroyer depot ship. Conscious of the need to reassure the British public that men at sea were enjoying Christmas 1942 as if they were at home, the Admiralty photographed festivities. This month's rummage in the archives of the Imperial War Museum shows Tyne's CO doing the stirring while his first lieutenant pours in the rum. (A13317)

■ THIS photograph – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@IWM.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.

HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.68

S/Lt Peter Danckwerts, GC

UNWILLING – and, moreover, unable – to conquer the heart of the British Empire, Adolf Hitler set about trying to pummel it into submission.

Between September 1940 and June 1941, the Luftwaffe was dispatched almost nightly to raze cities and erase morale.

Liverpool, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Manchester, Coventry (infamously) – the German propaganda machine even coined the verb 'coventrieren' ('to coventrate') in 'honour' of the pounding the Midlands city received – and London, of course, all suffered under the Heinkels, Dorniers and Junkers.

In the first two months of the bombing campaign alone, the Blitz of popular memory, more than 13,000 tons of high explosive and in excess of a million incendiaries fell on Britain.

And perhaps as many as one in five of these never detonated. Some fell in the water, some fell on open ground, some smashed through the roofs of homes or dangled by their parachutes off factories.

It fell to a motley collection of men – normally Royal Engineers or Royal Navy – to render these devices, dubbed UXBs (Unexploded Bombs) safe, a task as fraught with danger then as it is today.

Dealing with danger brought its rewards. The pages of the *London Gazette* over the winter of 1940-41 are peppered with awards to sailors – many of them reservists – "for great gallantry and undaunted devotion to duty".

But rarely, if ever, did the official record of government expand on the deeds of these men so honoured.

Among them was Peter Victor Danckwerts, a brilliant scientist (he built a laboratory in his attic as a schoolboy) who joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve when war broke out and trained as a bomb disposal officer.

In the autumn of 1940 he found himself posted to the Port of London Authority, charged with dealing with aerial mines.

At first, the job was rather frustrating – frustrating, Danckwerts said two decades later, because "most of the bombs fell in the water so I didn't have a great deal to do".

But such was bombing by night that the mines fell as often on land as they did in the Thames – and soon Danckwerts and his colleagues were called upon to render the explosives safe.

Dealing with the Germans' aerial mine was a daunting prospect: "it was eight feet long and about two feet in diameter, thicker than a pillar box and longer than a tall man," Danckwerts

recalled. It was also packed with 1,500lbs of explosive.

In water, the magnetic field generated by a passing ship would detonate the mine; on land, a fuse with a 15-second delay was intended to trigger the device, but often it didn't.

After accompanying an expert in mines from the Admiralty on one defusing mission (among his words of wisdom: "If you hear it buzzing, run like hell...") and having taken a German fuse to pieces in the safety of the Port Authority HQ, the junior officer was ready to deal with the Blitz.

He was soon in action. The first mine he neutralised had landed in bushes "in the wilds of South London". The fuse was removed without too much trouble. Satisfied with his work, Danckwerts and his CPO sat on the now-safe mine and had a cigarette... Two more were rendered harmless before dawn (the two men took the mines' parachutes as souvenirs).

It wasn't long before Danckwerts and his team were branded 'mine experts'. Given the proper tools, they were on the go all through the hours daylight (nighttime defusing was forbidden).

The young officer rather played down his role – certainly compared with fellow bomb disposal officers. He had, he lamented, "nothing particularly spectacular to deal with", although he did find one mine adorned with "a rude message" to Chamberlain.

Bomb disposal, he maintained "wasn't particularly frightening". He continued: "You find you're getting a lot of credit for doing very little work and taking rather a small amount of risk."

Peter Danckwerts did a lot of work, not a little. Over one two-day/two-night period he and his team safely dealt with 16 unexploded mines.

His expertise was called upon overseas; he deployed to Sicily in 1943 when the Allies invaded and was wounded clearing a minefield.

Post-war he resumed his scientific career, taught at Imperial College and lectured around the world on the subject of chemical engineering. He died in 1984.



Carrier starts to take shape

THE ships are probably beginning to look familiar – you will have seen them, in various guises, in computer-generated graphics over the past few years.

The ones pictured on this page are about as close as we will get to the real thing, because the main structural elements have been finalised. Only the details are liable to change.

But the two Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers are more than just digital images. They have started to take physical form.

In shipyards and workshops around the country, parts of the new carriers are under construction, and even at this stage, geographically scattered as they are, recognisable sections are approaching completion.

Under the auspices of the

Aircraft Carrier Alliance – the main players being BAE Systems, BVT, Thales, Babcock and the MOD (as both customer and participant in the process) – and their sub-contractors, the bulbous bow is nearing completion at Appledore in the West Country, work on Lower Blocks 1 and 2 has begun on the Tyne and Lower Block 3 is under way at Govan on the Clyde, with the same yard starting on Block 4 next month.

Construction on the rudders and stabilisers is well under way, as is work on the sponsons.

The massive aircraft lifts and diesel generators are all completed.

There has also been a good deal of work on infrastructure to cope with the new ships, with one of the main projects being the preparation of No 1 Dock at



Pictures: BAE Systems

● A graphic of the Royal Navy's future carrier class – though in reality it would be a rare event for the two ships to operate together

Rosyth, originally built in World War 1.

The £35m project, due for completion next summer, will include a 120m-span crane which is due for delivery early next year, and by then the dock will hopefully have a name with more resonance than No 1 Dock.

So the hulls are in hand, but it will be years before the diverse units are welded together into a recognisable ship.

A similar, parallel path is being trodden by those responsible for the ship's systems, with integration being the mantra on everyone's lips.

There are two aspects to the systems side of things.

The first is the actual engineering – the development of hardware and associated software to achieve the desired results, and how each system fits into the steel hull and interacts with other such systems, whether mission control, communications or myriad other crucial computer-driven functions.

But the second is just as important – training sailors to use these systems.

The beauty of the approach employed by the Aircraft Carrier Alliance is that these two aspects are symbiotic – as systems are developed and refined, people are more adept at using them, and as the people become more familiar with them they can feed observations or criticisms back into the system, identifying problem areas or ironing out wrinkles as they occur.

That philosophy exists at all levels of the carrier project in what some might consider the acme of 'smart acquisition'.

Regular meetings between

members of the Alliance allow potential problems, possible design improvements and a host of other build issues to be aired as soon

as they come to light – a means of 'de-risking' the process in the hope that no nasty shocks appear when it is more costly or difficult to rectify them – "plenty of wonders but no surprises", as one manager put it.

As *Navy News* went to press the focus was on de-risking joint air operations using a mix of sophisticated computer-driven simulations, and a sin-bin... more about that in our January edition.

Similar work is being carried out elsewhere – the communications and radar suites are the responsibility of BAE's Coronet facility at Cowes on the Isle of Wight, and where possible each separate system will be hooked up to the others to ensure they can 'talk' to each other and operate together with no interference.

The ethos of openness and honesty between commercial

partners and the customer extends across the Atlantic, where levels of industrial co-operation have pleasantly surprised some of the more experienced workforce on the Alliance teams.

And it is not just the war bit of these warships which require an in-depth, integrated approach.

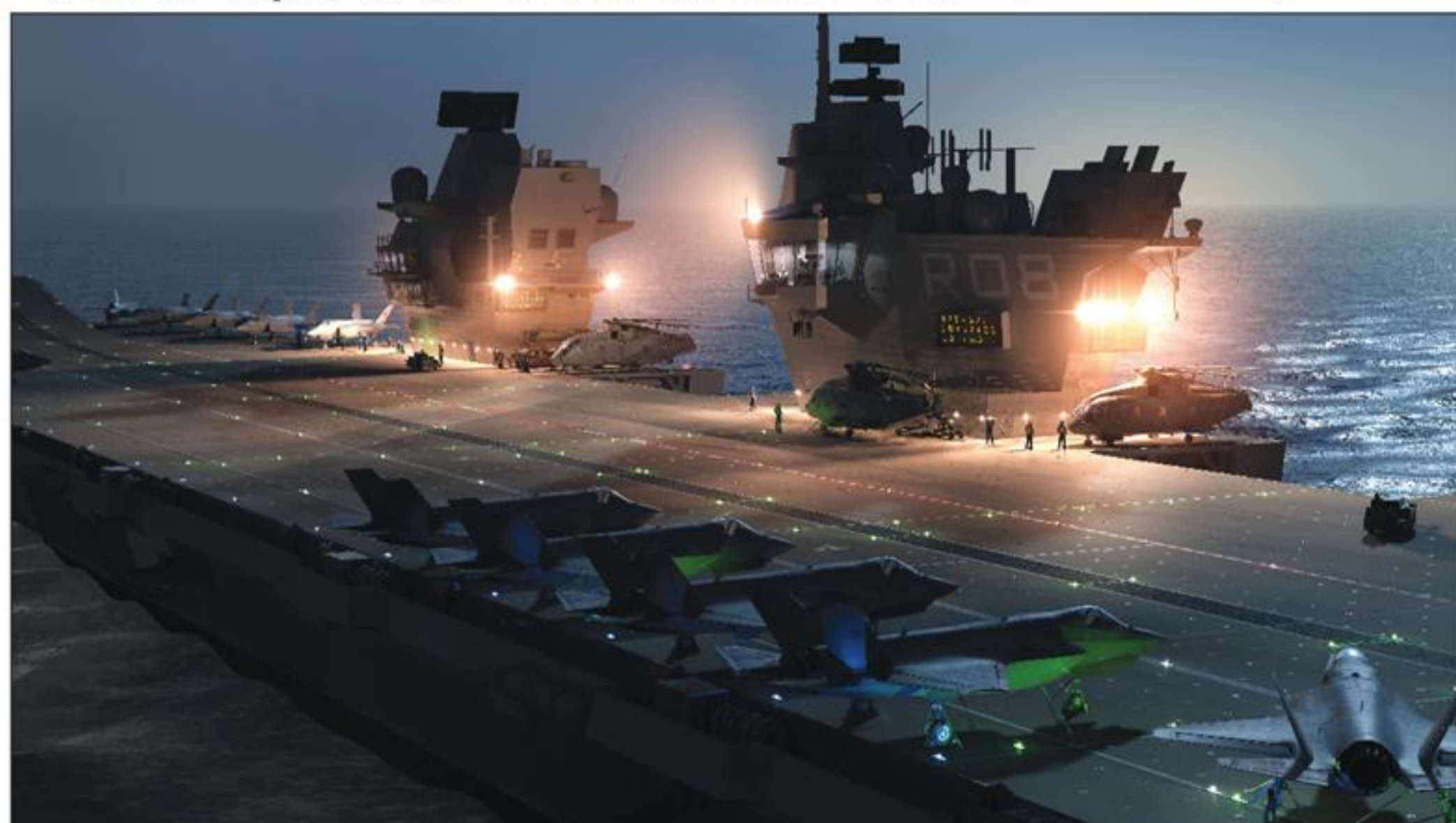
A carrier is certainly a floating airfield, allowing the UK to carry out autonomous operations wherever the politicians and military decide.

But it is also a floating office block for around 1,500 people who need to be connected to a reliable integrated IT system.

It is also a floating town, with the need for power, water supplies, sewerage, health services, recreation facilities and so on.

Components for the first ship, then, are taking shape right now.

But because of the requirements for niche expertise and sheer weight of engineering and manufacturing capacity, HMS Prince of Wales will be built subsequently – it was simply not practical or cost-effective to 'surge' production on two ships through the yards and factories.



● How the flight deck is expected to look on the Queen Elizabeth-class ships

Buses, pools and Hyde Park

AMAZING engineering achievements can usually be measured in terms of family cars, blue whales and Nelson's Column.

No blue whales here, but a fistful of facts which will give you some idea of the kind of ship coming the RN's way, hopefully in the middle of the next decade.

At 65,000 tonnes, the Queen Elizabeth-class ships will each provide four acres of mobile UK sovereign territory.

At 280m in length, they are almost half as long again as the current Invincible-class carriers.

They will be around 70m wide – twice the width of the current carriers.

The total complement of each ship, with embarked air group, will be 1,600, of which just under 700 will be ship's company. That means the new carriers will have only 50 per cent more manpower than the Invincible-class, despite being three times the size.

The new carriers will handle 40 aircraft, twice the capacity of the Invincible class, and each Joint

aircraft carrier alliance

Strike Fighter is expected to carry at least twice the payload of a Harrier.

The ships will measure 56m from keel to masthead – slightly taller than Nelson's Column.

Each carrier has a 110MW power station on board – enough juice for Portsea Island.

One of the RN's last big carriers, HMS Ark Royal, had sailors living in 100-man messes. In HMS Queen Elizabeth they will share six-berth cabins with adjacent toilet facilities and showers.

2,500km of cabling will be installed in each ship.

Annual fuel consumption is expected to be close to that of the Invincible-class ships, despite being three times the weight – equivalent to 40,000 family cars.

There are 370 acres of paintwork (1.5 million m²) on board – slightly greater than the area of Hyde Park in London.

The ships will be capable of reaching 25 knots.

Each carrier's long range radar is the same size as a large mobile home.

The new carriers will be driven by twin propellers, each weighing 33 tonnes – more than twice the weight of a double-decker bus and half as tall again.

The ships' anchors will be more than 3m high, and each weighing 13 tonnes (almost the same as that bus).

There will be a pair of powerful lifts on each new carrier, and each lift will be able to carry two Joint Strike Fighters between flight deck and hangar deck in 60 seconds. Between them they are powerful enough to shift the entire ship's company in one go.

The water treatment plant on each new carrier will be able to produce more than 500 tonnes of fresh water every day.

Some 80,000 tonnes of steel is on order for the completion of the two new ships – that is three times the amount used in the construction of the new Wembley Stadium.

Each ship's hangar is equivalent to 12 Olympic-sized swimming pools.



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News in brief

AIR Engineering Technicians from 824 Naval Air Squadron have been presented with their Qualified to Maintain certificates or Certificates of Competency by the Naval Secretary, Rear Admiral Charles Montgomery.

It marked the end of a long and arduous training programme ranging from core academic modules to exacting oral boards.

All are now looking forward to joining their squadrons at the front line of aircraft maintenance.

A TOP cleric has been reunited with one of his old Sunday School pupils during a visit to HMS Raleigh.

The Rt Rev William Hewitt, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, was touring the Cornish training establishment when he caught up with trainee Warfare Specialist Fiona McCormick, seven weeks into her nine-week basic training.

It was the first time Fiona (35), from East Lothian, had seen the Rt Rev Hewitt in around 20 years, though he is in regular contact with her parents.

TWO civilian members of HMS Gannet's team have been rewarded for their outstanding contribution to the search and rescue station.

Gannet's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Bryan Nicholas presented awards to senior supervisor survival equipment technician engineer Reinhardt van Greunen, of VT.

Reinhardt is in charge of overseeing the maintenance and repair of all the unit's survival equipment.

There was also a special presentation to the Rev David Ness, who has been the unit's chaplain since 1981 and was described by Lt Cdr Nicholas as "a key member of the Gannet family".

MEMBERS of the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights were welcomed on board HMS Ark Royal to present sailors with efficiency and effectiveness prizes.

The company is one of the oldest livery companies, with more than 800 years of history, and it has close ties with the aircraft carrier.

The winners of the CO's Special Commendations were CPO Clemson, LA Hughes, PO Kursner, PO Payne, Logs (Pers) Prophet and LS Towers, all of whom set an example to others during the recent Contractor's Support Period.

Four of the prizewinners were singled out for an additional special prize of a laptop computer, donated by the Company.

The winners of the Shipwright's Special Prize were WO2 Crozier, CPO Sams, PO Clayton and Lt Cdr Phil Rogers.



Picture: SAC Adam Fletcher (RAF)

Strike Wing think bike

STAFF from *Ride* magazine were invited to visit the Naval Strike Wing at RAF Cottesmore, and they brought a couple of machines along for biking aficionados to take a look at.

The latest Harley-Davidson and V8 Yamaha were parked on the apron close to another iconic vehicle, the GR9 Harrier painted in the Fly Navy 100 colours.

After five years on operations the stability offered by living and

working in one place meant many of Cottesmore's riders have been dusting off their own bikes – or thinking of buying their dream machine.

Pictured are Lt Dave Bouyac (left), of NSW, who organised the event, and RAF Cottesmore's Media and Communications Officer Sqn Ldr Paula Willmot (right), with NSW staff who were keen to get a closer look at the bikes.



● CPO John Popplewell with Freda-Brenda

Bangers prove a smash

A SENIOR rating is in the running for a national prize for his bangers.

Three years ago CPOMEA John Popplewell started keeping a few young pigs for the freezer, using land which was lying idle.

Now the submariner, who works at HMS Drake, has more on his plate than he bargained for.

When family and friends tasted the meat of his Gloucestershire Old Spot pigs, they declared it the best they had eaten.

So John and his family started breeding the porkers, allowing them to roam free on two acres and providing five-star porcine accommodation.

Happy pigs meant a popular range of joints, chops, bacon, ham and sausages, sold under the name Popplewell's Pedigree Pigs.

As a result of positive comments at a tasting during the Best of Bodmin Moor meeting, the deep's butcher, Trevor Coles of Altarnun, was asked to produce strings of sausages for the South West heat of the British Pig Association (BPA)'s competition in Truro.

The result – Reserve Champion Breakfast Sausage – put the Popplewells into the BPA grand final at the new Agrilive Smithfield event being staged at Stoneleigh Park in Warwickshire this month, with the Popplewell bangers being judged by Anthony Worral Thompson, among others.

John joined the Navy at HMS Ganges as a 15-year-old in 1972 and plans to leave next November, aged 54, after 38 years' service.

Back with the Mob

LAST month we featured a thespian who had joined the Royal Navy.

This time round it's a sailor who became a thespian.

Shaun Williamson trained with the Navy in 1984 but left a year later to pursue a career in entertainment.

And the move paid off as Shaun became a major character on BBC soap *EastEnders* and later played a long-suffering version of himself in *Extras*.

But his latest brushes with the Mob came as he toured the country playing Norman Stanley Fletcher in the stage show *Porridge* – the role created by Ronnie Barker in the legendary TV sitcom of the same name.

Shaun's trip down military memory lane started with a visit to HMS Raleigh, where he did his basic training 25 years ago.

Porridge was being staged at the Theatre Royal in Plymouth, and he was invited to watch Drake 014 Entry's passing out parade.

A month later and the show pitched up at the King's Theatre in Southsea, and Shaun was invited to Portsmouth Naval Base.

Within moments of arriving on board HMS Liverpool the actor had felt the full force of the law



● Norman Stanley Fletcher – aka Shaun Williamson – is apprehended by RPO Nina Slocumbe and LReg Lindsay Oliver (right) on board HMS Liverpool

as the destroyer's RPO Nina Slocumbe and LReg Lindsay Oliver moved in on the old lag. Evading the clutches of the Senior Service for a second time,

Shaun said: "I had a great time with the Navy."

"I have some fantastic memories, and being in Portsmouth today and seeing everything here has

brought those all back.

"I saw a passing out parade recently and it made me quite misty-eyed – it was very nostalgic."

Nelson welcomed on Victory



● LMEA Steven Nelson receives his good conduct badge from Cdr Rob Bellfield, watched by his line manager PO Tim Covell

OCTOBER 21 was a day of double celebration for LMEA Steven Nelson of HMS Ark Royal.

Not only was it the anniversary of his namesake's victory at the Battle of Trafalgar, but more importantly (for him) he was awarded his first good conduct badge on Nelson's flagship.

LMEA Nelson joined Ark Royal in September having successfully completed his professional engineering training at HMS Sultan, and is currently working in the diesel section of the Marine Engineering Department.

Presenting LMEA Nelson with his badge was Ark's second-in-command, Cdr Rob Bellfield, who said Steven had "quickly become a well-liked reliable member of the marine engineering team working long hours with little assistance, recently volunteering himself to assist with changing one of the ship's engines."

Award snapped up

A RN reservist from Tynemouth has received a medal which marks his role in protecting RFA ships in the Gulf off Iraq last year.

AB Lee Fawkes, a freelance photographer in civilian life, received his Operational Service Medal from the Commander Maritime Reserves, Cdre Chris Steel.



● Lt Vikki Horne reads a pirate story to a group of children at Torpoint Nursery and Infant School

Picture: Dave Sherfield

Time for school

TRAINEE RN officers have swapped their classroom at HMS Raleigh for lessons at Torpoint Nursery and Infant School.

The group of ten trainee Logistics Officers spent time with the Year 2 pupils, hearing about their latest projects, which included finding out about pirates and following the progress of a clipper boat on a round-the-world trip.

The officers also read stories to the children and were given a VIP tour of the school's wooden ship, HMS Lowen, designed and built by the children in the grounds of the school.

Two officers, Lts Steven Charles and Neil Howe, were even made to walk the plank.

Lt Des Linhan said: "We were

made to feel very welcome by everyone at the school, especially the children, who seemed to have a great time and made us all laugh."

The visit came in the final week of the students' eight-month Initial Logistics Officer course, carried out at the Defence Maritime Logistics School (DMLS).

By tradition each class organises a charity fund-raising event in their final week of training, but this group decided to donate their time.

Lt Vikki Horne said: "Visiting the school was very rewarding."

"It was more nerve-racking reading stories to the children than giving some of the presentations we had to give on course, but it was also a lot more fun."

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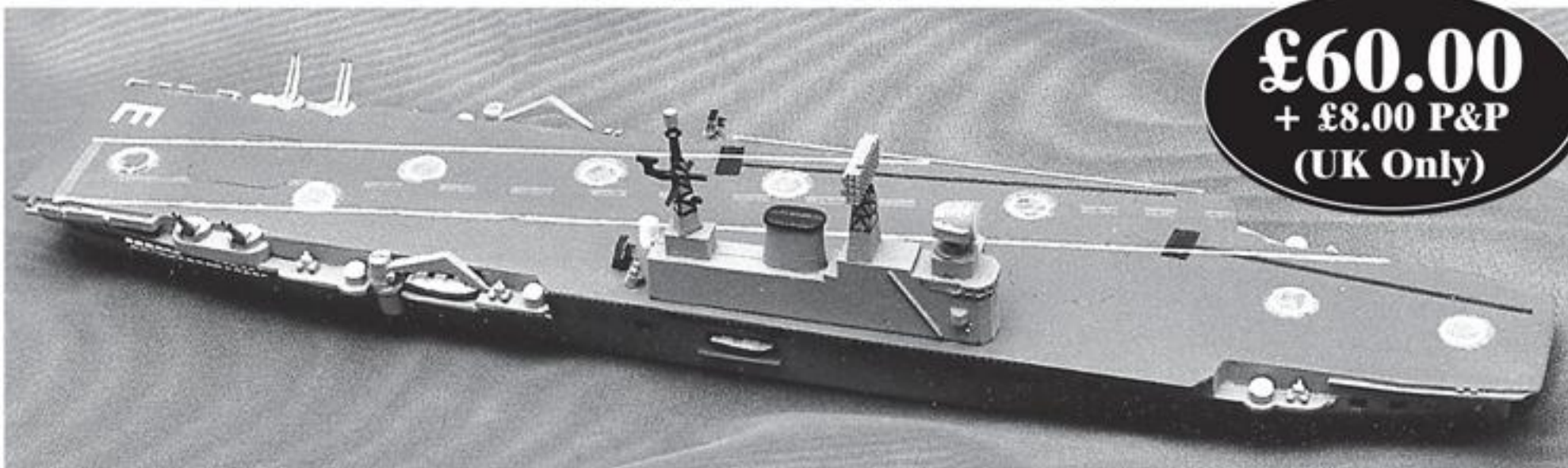
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Catterick medal hunt

AN Army NCO whose troop found a World War 1 RN medal are hoping to reunite it with its owner's family.

WO1 Lee Grunshaw's REME troop was tidying up as they moved into Megiddo Lines at Catterick Garrison early this year when they found the medal with the following inscription: K. 39925 J. Fleetwood. STO. 1 RN.

Medals records do not go that far back, and other approaches to archives did not come up with any clues.

So Lee is now asking *Navy News* readers if they can shed any light on the mystery – who was the recipient, and why did it end up at Catterick?

Lee said: "I will retain this medal for as long as it takes as I feel it is the right thing to do."

If anyone has any suggestions, please write to WO1 (SSM) L Grunshaw, Troop WO1, RLC Stores Troop, 1 CS Bn REME, Megiddo Lines, Catterick Garrison, DL9 3QG.



● Capt Brown and Gp Capt Al Monkman at the Officers' Mess

Winkle returns to base

RENOWNED test pilot and RN veteran Capt Eric 'Winkle' Brown made his return visit to the station he used to command.

Capt Brown, who holds the record for the most types of aircraft flown and the most aircraft carrier landings, was VIP guest of honour at the RAF Lossiemouth officers' mess Battle of Britain dinner.

The aviator was in charge of the station between September 1967 to March 1970 – when it was a Royal Naval air station – and took the chance to look over the last 70 years of station history.

He also spoke to station personnel about his exploits – from some of the Luftwaffe aircraft he flew in the latter part of World War 2 to some of the Nazi war criminals he interviewed, including concentration camp commandants and Hitler's deputy, Hermann Göring, the head of the Luftwaffe.

Capt Brown has flown 487 different aircraft types in his long career – not including variants, so that the Spitfire and Seafire only count as one entry in the logbook.

They range from gliders to airliners, flying boats to helicopters.

He made more than 2,400 deck landings, including the first jet, a de Havilland Sea Vampire on HMS Ocean in 1945.

Highest authority

THE CO of HMS Victory climbed straight into the record books when he demonstrated his head for heights.

Lt Cdr Oscar Whild clambered 205ft up the man o' war's main mast, and is believed to be the first captain of the flagship to have ever scaled the mast to check the rigging and general condition of the ship's fittings.

Back when the ship was a working vessel, inspections would only have been carried out by the crew rather than risk their captain.

Yet despite the chilly autumn weather Lt Cdr Whild took just ten minutes to reach the top, where he demonstrated the utility of new ropes and equipment provided by Bell Rigging.

"It was good to see the mast up close," he said. "There is an awful lot of rigging up there which looks complicated from the ground, but from the top you can see how it all fits together."

In recent years inspections have been carried out from the platform of a cherry picker which didn't allow for complete access to the ropes or fittings, and required large areas of the deck to be cordoned off.

The fitting of new abseiling ropes to Victory will allow the ship to open much larger areas of the upper deck during routine maintenance.

Despite the captain's enthusiasm, future inspections will be carried out by climbers from Bell Rigging in conjunction with the naval base's partners BVT Surface Fleet.



● Lt Cdr Whild scales HMS Victory's main mast

Picture: Bell Rigging

Liverpool picks up a (plastic) penguin

YOU can never have too many pictures of giant plastic penguins with coiffured flaxen hair.

Even better if there's a couple of matelots involved...

The matelots are Logs(Pers) James Gaskell and LLogs(Pers) Leanne Ainscough, both serving aboard HMS Liverpool.

And the giant plastic penguin? That's Patrick, the mascot of a public arts festival which opened

in Liverpool last month and runs until January 10.

He waddled down to the destroyer's home at Portsmouth to help launch the Go Penguins arts festival aboard the ship.

Around 150 penguins are being painted and decorated by schools in Liverpool, Wirral and environs. Once painted, they'll adorn open spaces, town centres, public buildings and the like.



Airborn Jacob revisits 771



● Jacob Burns visited RNAS Culdrose to meet members of 771 NAS – he was born in one of squadron's Sea Kings

JACOB Burns travelled to RNAS Culdrose to say a special thank you to some of the search and rescue crew of 771 Naval Air Squadron.

Because Jacob was born in one of 771's Sea King helicopters during an emergency flight from the Isles of Scilly to the Royal Cornwall Hospital in August 2001, when his mother Nikki could not wait any longer.

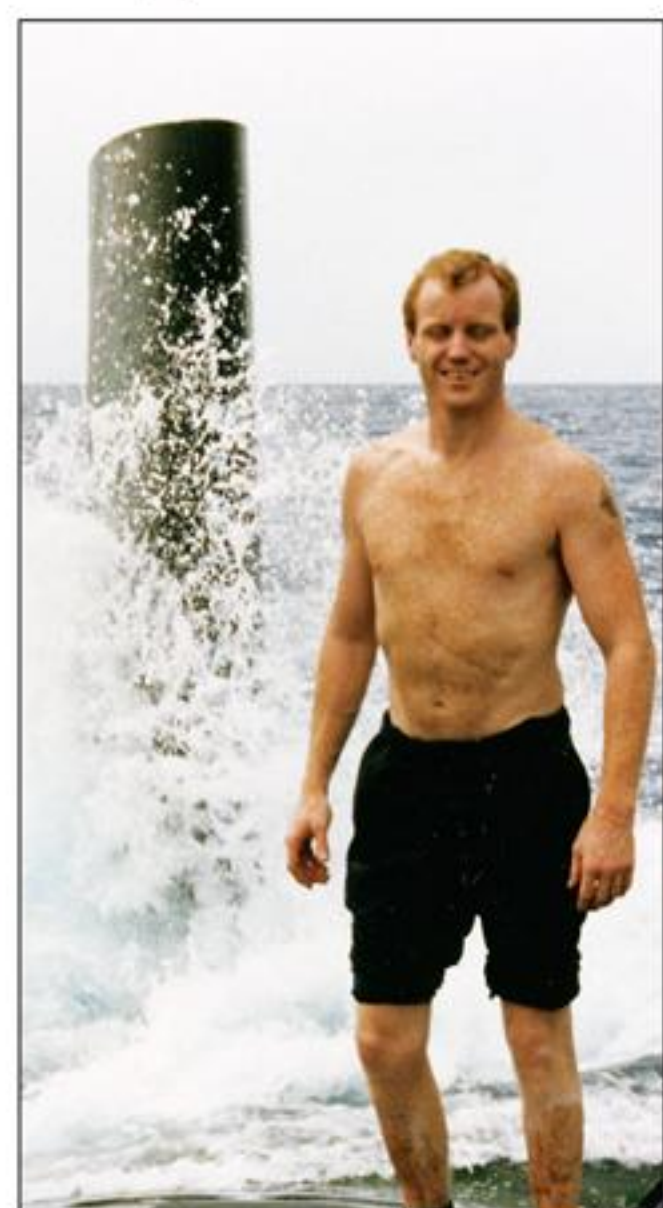
The pilot, Lt Cdr Martin Lanni, one of the aircrewmen, PO Darren Hall, and paramedic Dave Pascoe greeted Jacob and Nikki and reminisced about the flight, which attracted plenty of publicity at the time.

Jacob also got to sit at the controls of the very aircraft in which he was born.

During the flight eight years ago, Lt Cdr Lanni transmitted a rare radio message, informing air traffic control that the number of passengers had just increased by one.

Jacob still lives at St Agnes, on the Isles of Scilly, where his mother runs a chocolate-making business.

Alpha and omega of Turbulent



PICTURED off Andros Island in 1985 following a global deployment, a young POSA, Derek Pallister (left) stands proud next to the fin of HMS Turbulent.

Derek had been with the boat from build in 1984, and continued to serve until achieving the rate of CPO, finally retiring from the Royal Navy after 23 years service.

At that point he had no idea that his son Nathan (right, pictured almost 25 years later) would join Turbulent in 2002 as an AB.

Nathan, now a Leading Seaman, has participated in a varied array of deployments over the past seven years.


And more importantly, the Pallister family will have seen Turbulent from build to her planned decommissioning in 2012.

Despite disagreements over branch supremacy, both men take great pride in being associated with HMS Turbulent.



For Christmas

A BOTTLE OF PUSSEY'S RUM® OR THE NELSON SHIP'S DECANTER



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Lights, camera,

SAILORS on HMS Iron Duke enjoy a film night on the frigate's flight deck under the Caribbean stars.

The film? No, not *Close Encounters*, but the thriller *Taken* starring Liam Neeson (you'll just have to take our word for it...).

But why watch a movie when you can star in one?

For three days, the ship's company forgot about the challenges of life aboard a Type 23 on patrol in the Caribbean to play, er, sailors dealing with the challenges of life aboard a Type 23 on patrol in the Caribbean.

They're the 'stars' of the RN's new recruiting advert which airs on television and cinema screens in the new year.

Of course, being sailors and Royal Marines they can't command huge salaries, make outrageous demands or act like prima donnas...

Nassau in the Bahamas was picked as the location for the new ad.

As for the scenario, well there's a bit of counter-narcotics and disaster relief (which, funnily enough, is Iron Duke's reason for being in these parts).

Mercifully, this year's hurricane season has not wrought havoc in the Caribbean on a scale comparable with previous years.

So the production team behind the film created chaos - everything from broken telegraph poles to cars turned on their side.

Locals of all ages were hired to act as victims of natural disaster and the sailors were charged with doing what they do for real in the aftermath of a storm: provide aid to the needy and restore vital services.

Come nightfall and the Iron Ducks removed their disaster relief 'hats' and donned counter-drugs ones (something they're quite good at, having scored the biggest cocaine bust in RN history last month).

A set was mocked-up to replicate a board-and-search by night, with flashes of white light piercing the darkness to

give viewers an idea of what it's like to scour a potentially hostile vessel - with the additional hindrance of night.

After a busy day and night ashore, the film crew shifted to the frigate.

The film crew spent the morning with Officer of the Watch 4 Lt Melanie Shortt, chosen as the 'poster girl' for warfare officer recruitment.

Scenes filmed ranged from football, running, and gunnery to a flight deck barbecue.

"The advert plays on words, the shots are short and snappy giving the viewer a small insight into the diversity of the job," she explains.

"I found myself changing from one uniform to the next capturing all the different roles including the work hard/play hard philosophy.

"Filming was a great experience, one that I will always remember. Once the advert comes out I hope it's successful with the public."

The afternoon and evening were dedicated to yet more boarding ops and a lot of filming of the sea boat.

AB(WS) Daniel Hughes was the bowman in HMS Iron Duke's sea boat for this long period: "I was nominated to be bowman for the filming and took the opportunity," says AB(WS) Daniel Hughes.

"It was long, exhausting hours but luckily the sea state wasn't too bad and there were lots of opportunities to get a drink."

Of the non-alcoholic variety we might add...

The filming extended into the night and the crux of the mission: the boarding of a vessel suspected of carrying narcotics.

The boarding team were 'armed' with rubber SA80 rifles and proceeded onto the vessel at high speed from the sea boat after the immortal moviemaking word 'action'.

"Filming the scene seemed very realistic: the director allowed me to instruct the team how a boarding is conducted," said Mne David 'Chats' Chatterton, one of Iron Duke's boarding team.

"It took a long time to set up and shoot however, I felt the atmosphere and tempo were correct and I am looking forward to seeing the final shot."

Which shouldn't be too long off now as the advert will 'roll out' early in 2010.

When not taking part in *Ersatz* disaster relief

missions, the ship's company have been sharing their knowledge and skills with a clutch of British and Commonwealth nations around the Caribbean.

The frigate visited St Lucia, Montserrat, Anguilla, and the British Virgin Islands in the space of a busy two weeks, with a flying visit to the Turks and Caicos Islands by Commanding Officer Cdr Andrew Stacey in the ship's Lynx, 'Charger'.

"Although the programme sounds idyllic, this was a very demanding and complex part of the deployment," explained Lt Cdr Martin Hoather, Iron Duke's weapon engineer officer.

We'll begin our 'cruise' in St Lucia, where the sailors bumped into the RN netball team (as you do), visiting the island for a two-week training camp and tournament. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many of the ship's company went along to watch and lend their support.

Next to Montserrat, where the Soufrière Hills volcano erupted devastatingly a dozen years ago, wrecking the island's capital of Plymouth.

Recently, the fiery peak has shown fresh signs of activity (experts rate the danger level as three on a scale of one to five, five being the fires of hell raging)...

...something Iron Duke found on her arrival as she sailed under a huge cloud of ash.

Charger took island police officers up on a 'crop survey' sortie to see if they could spot marijuana plantations from the sky.

Then it was the turn of the island's governor, Peter Waterworth, his chief minister Reuben Meade and the director of Montserrat Volcano Observatory Paul Cole to inspect the volcano at close hand.

"Flying right up to an active volcano was both an awe-inspiring and surreal experience which will probably end up never being repeated unless we're lucky enough to come back," said Lt Dan Williams, Charger's pilot.

"As we flew the governor and the geologist around the mountain to analyse the recent violent activity, we witnessed the summit kicking out huge clouds of ash and pyroclastic flows, which ran down the mountainside into the sea like an avalanche."



action...

"What made the scene even more menacing were the remains of the abandoned houses where previous eruptions have forced residents to flee to safety, leaving a 'no-go zone' on the island."

There was nothing quite as spectacular in Anguilla – but there was another drugs bust.

Three members of Royal Anguillian Police Force climbed into Charger to look for drugs plantations. They found one, growing marijuana, and promptly destroyed it.

The ship's command team took part in a disaster relief exercise, simulating the aftermath of an earthquake ten miles off the Anguillian coast.

Charger was used to conduct an island recce to assess damage caused by the earthquake, giving the governor, director of disaster management and the ship's CO the ability to assess Anguilla's vulnerable areas. The exercise also included a look at several of the relief centres and relief distribution points.

And so to the British Virgin Islands – "one of the highlights of the deployment to date", says Lt Cdr Hoather. It is "a small friendly island with beautiful beaches and strong ties to the United Kingdom".

Iron Duke's presence was particularly well received by the locals, especially the marine police with whom the ship took the opportunity to practise boat skills and boarding techniques.

Another helicopter recce of the island for both the local disaster management team and the police resulted in the destruction of seven marijuana plantations.

Lt Tom Gell is Iron Duke's boarding officer; he took the local marine police through training exercises:

"All personnel were enthusiastic. The marine police added to their existing skills and also took away new boarding techniques."

"They do not get much opportunity to practise boarding larger vessels, so we went through the key steps involved and boarded Iron Duke."

"The police were very grateful and it was good to work with a new team."

The ship's football and rugby teams accepted the challenge thrown down by local sides. The footballers won 2-1; despite a valiant effort from the rugby squad, they lost 10-0.

"The game got under way after some torrential rain, which we thought would act in our favour," explained PO 'George' Logan, Iron Duke's rugby manager.

Or maybe not – because a fumble in difficult conditions meant the home team were 5-0 up after a torrid first five minutes.

That said for the rest of the half, the Iron Ducks held their own, defending their line superbly and forging breaks which might have brought scores but for a few minor mistakes.

As it was, it was the locals who bagged the second – and deciding – try.

Nevertheless, says George, the sailors "gave their all. An enjoyable evening and the team are well-practised for the next encounter."

The ship's basketball team – still in their infancy – were outclassed by the national team, but both sides thoroughly enjoyed the match.

At each of the visits the ship held social functions to engage the local community.

For decades, official receptions on the flight deck have proved to be an effective way of spreading word of the RN's mission in the region. It's been no different on this deployment.

After three hectic days in Nassau – aside from filming that advert, there were several sports fixtures, community work repairing a children's home, and a high-profile official reception marking the High Commissioner's departure – it was off to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, for a far more relaxing five-day stand-off.

Having laid on umpteen receptions around the Caribbean, how nice it was that the Navy League – a lobby group stressing the importance of naval power and the sea to fellow Americans – treated the Iron Ducks to a reception in rig.



"Flying right up to an active volcano was both an awe-inspiring and surreal experience which will probably never be repeated."

– Lt Dan Williams

"The Americans were very friendly, Fort Lauderdale itself was really atmospheric, and it was definitely one of the best runs ashore I have had in the Royal Navy," enthused LET(WE) Mike Davies.

The fun done, it was back to counter-narcotics patrol – but one with a difference.

Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar joined the ship for the first day of that patrol, learning more about the frigate's work in the region.

Lastly to Trinidad and Tobago, pretty much the last port of call on this deployment on the left-hand side of The Pond.

As with many other Caribbean nations, the islands' coastguard were keen to learn from the frigate – and the frigate was keen to take advantage of local knowledge.

"The last few weeks have been both successful and productive," Cdr Stacey said emphatically.

"Iron Duke has been able to offer practical support and reassurance to many of the UK's overseas territories, particularly working alongside the governments, local police and disaster relief agencies."

Iron Duke's busy – and record-breaking – Caribbean deployment ends with the frigate's return to Portsmouth just in time for Christmas.

pictures: la[phot] simmo simpson, frpu east

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Rising sun over BRNC

STAFF at Britannia Royal Naval College said 'konnichiwa' as the spiritual home of the officer corps welcomed senior visitors from Japan – with a view to furthering exchanges between the two navies.

Makoto Iokibe, the head of the Japanese Defence Academy, Vice Admiral Ota, director of the international exchange programme, and Japan's naval attaché to the UK, Capt Hiroyuki Terada, headed to Devon to witness the instruction of officer cadets for the Senior Service.

They observed some of the basic leadership training in the grounds at Dartmouth as well as visiting the converted minehunter Hindostan.

The Japanese guests also spent some time chatting with rookie officers in BRNC's Bridge Wing – in English mercifully, although at least one of the RN trainees was able to converse in Japanese (a bit).

OC George Swithinbank spent a year in the land of the Rising Sun teaching English as a foreign language.

"Japanese is a very difficult language to learn – they have three alphabets, one of which is pictorial. Thankfully, the visitors had an excellent command of English," he explained.

The Japanese Navy was originally modelled on the RN and 120 years down the line, today's Japanese Self Defence Force is looking at an exchange programme involving its counterpart of BRNC in Etajima.

"Given the cultural differences between the two nations, an exchange programme would be of huge benefit for the Royal Navy," said Dartmouth's Commanding Officer Cdre Jake Moores.

"However, the vastly-different training regimes at the two establishments will make anything more than short exchanges extremely difficult."

You have to be raven-mad to work here...

ANY sailors out there who are extroverts and can spin a good dit?

And whose interest in British history goes a little deeper than watching *The Tudors* on a Friday night?

If so, and you are a warrant officer or senior rating, the RN needs you to fly the Navy flag at the Tower of London – for the Queen has allowed sailors to become Beefeaters for the first time.

Up to now, only the other services and the Royal Marines have been eligible to don the distinctive uniform and join the elite troop of Yeoman Warders, which dates back to 1485.

When the Duke of Wellington became Constable of the Tower in 1826, he ruled that anyone who wanted to join must have sworn an oath of allegiance.

As sailors to this day do not swear allegiance to the Sovereign (their loyalty is taken as read, as anyone in the Senior Service would tell you), this ruled out the Navy – whether by accident or ducal design isn't clear.

But 183 years after Wellington laid the rules, the Governor of the Tower successfully petitioned the Queen to allow the Navy to join.

The Queen consented earlier this year; now senior rates with 22 years' service who hold the Long Service and Good Conduct medal are eligible to apply.

"We're keen to see the first Chief Petty Officer or Warrant Officer join our team," said David Cooper, human resources manager for the Tower and a former Royal Engineer.



● Warders must be obeyed... Former Royal Marines turned Beefeaters 'Barney' Chandler and Steve Froggatt

"What we're looking for are extroverts who like people. We're a small, close-knit team, and if you can integrate you can really enjoy it."

The Beefeaters, or Yeomen Warders of Her Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress the Tower of London, to give them their proper name, are ceremonial guardians of

the Tower.

In principle they are responsible for looking after any prisoners (the last ones, curiously enough, were the Kray twins in 1952, for avoiding National Service) and for safeguarding the Crown Jewels.

In practice they are highly entertaining tour guides whose lively presentations on British history are famous throughout the world.

There are 35 Yeoman Warders, who work a shift system to look after the 10,000-15,000 visitors who come to the Tower on a busy day. They live in accommodation within the Tower walls, some of which dates back to the 13th century.

There has been a Royal Navy presence at the Tower since the 1970s, when Royal Marines were eligible to join. There are currently two, WO2 Barney Chandler and C/Sgt Steve Froggatt.

Steve, 53, served with 40 Cdo and the Brigade Air Squadron, and became a Beefeater ten years ago. He was head-hunted from his job selling cars in Exeter, when the Deputy Governor of the Tower thought he might make a good Beefeater.

He said: "I got a phone call from the Deputy Governor, who'd known me in the Corps, and thought I might like to apply."

"I wanted to do something different – and there couldn't be a better chance to do something different than this job."

He added: "I love every minute of it. It isn't just a job, it's a way of life, and it involves your whole family."

"I live here with my wife and our two youngest children. They're aged 13 and nine and just started new schools. They love seeing people's faces when they say they live in the Tower of London."

Barney, 42, a heavy weapons anti-tank specialist, served with 45 Cdo for 15 years, 42 Cdo for five years and at Raleigh, Northwood and Lympstone. He joined the Beefeaters six months ago when he left the Corps.

He explained: "I've always been interested in history and I always fancied working here, but I didn't visit the Tower until my wife and I came to London for our honeymoon."

"I fell in love with the place and when I mentioned this to my RSM, who knew Steve Froggatt, he put us in touch and started the ball rolling. I came to visit and it went from there."

He added: "I absolutely love this job. The banter is fantastic and it's almost more military than

the military. We're a very close-knit team."

"Do Steve and I feel outnumbered by the former Army Beefeaters? No – the two of us keep them in their place."

He added: "Without doubt you have to be a people person and you have to be patient with the public."

"And you have to enjoy having your photograph taken. You're always in the public eye. If you ever lost your rag it would be all over YouTube..."

Like London cabbies, Beefeaters must acquire a legendary 'knowledge,' which takes months to learn.

Known as 'the story,' every Beefeater builds up his historical knowledge (or hers, there is currently one woman) by following a mentor around for six months, listening, and learning it piece by piece.

They are also expected to read up on their history (watching *The Tudors* on a Friday night doesn't really cut it, according to Steve and Barney) and after six months they are tested for their knowledge and general presentation skills, before being let loose on the public to take their first guided tour.

A sense of humour is vital, especially given some of the odd questions the public ask. "The strangest I got was a woman who wanted to know which side of the river the Millennium Bridge was on," relates Steve. "But the commonest two questions are, 'are the Crown Jewels real?' and 'how much are they worth?'"

Some Yeoman Warders join straight from leaving the Services, others leave and do other jobs first. Very few Beefeaters leave before they have to retire at 65, so vacancies occur only a couple of times a year, and there are usually 20-30 applicants for every place.

The selection process involves giving a presentation on an aspect of Tower-related history, followed by a walk-round with the Yeoman Gaoler, followed by a formal board interview.

"A good time to apply is when you're within a year or so of leaving the Navy," explained Mr Cooper.

He added: "The best thing to do if you're interested is ring me and arrange to come and visit. If you like what you see and you've got an extrovert, cheerful personality, put in your application – and bone up on your history."

If you're interested in a second career at the Tower and would like to find out more, email David.Cooper@hrp.org.uk or call 0203 166 6170.

Pirate show takes award

TV HARDMAN-turned-documentary-maker Ross Kemp won a nautical 'Oscar' for shedding light on modern-day piracy.

The former *EastEnders* was one of five journalists, writers and campaigners singled out at the annual Maritime Media Awards.

Ross' Sky1 series *In Search of Pirates* – which witnessed the RN's anti-piracy mission aboard HMS Northumberland before the actor went ashore to meet Somali pirates – was named the best TV/radio documentary at a ceremony in London.

An impressive body of work down the years by the *Liverpool Daily Post's* maritime correspondent Peter Elson ensured he earned the coveted Desmond Wettern Media Award for the best journalistic contribution on maritime issues. The award is named for the popular *Daily Telegraph* journalist, the last naval correspondent of Fleet Street.

Judges said Mr Elson was "a champion of maritime heritage" whose expertise was highly-respected within and without the nautical world.

The finest book on a maritime subject was deemed to be a "beautifully-written" biography of Australian sailor/adventurer Alan Villiers, *Voyager of the Winds*, by fellow Antipodean Kate Lance. She received the Mountbatten Maritime Award.

From their beginnings a decade ago, the awards have mushroomed to not just champion the best maritime journalism, but also to recognise the efforts of RN/RM units to promote the Senior Service, as well as lifetime contributions to the maritime world.

For the second year running, flagship HMS Illustrious took the Fleet Media prize as the RN vessel most in the public eye this year – not least thanks to Fly Navy 100 events. She had, said judges, made the most of every opportunity to highlight the Senior Service's work across the media spectrum.

And finally, the campaigning by journalist and environmentalist Charles Clover to warn of the depletion of the oceans' fishing stocks – as highlighted in his critically-acclaimed book *The End of the Line* – was rewarded with the Maritime Fellowship Award.

The Princess Royal was guest of honour at the ceremony in the Institute of Directors, also attended by former Chief of Defence Staff Admiral the Lord Boyce and present First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, who reminded guests that "sea blindness is an illness which needs constant medication".

'ello, 'ello, 'ello, it's H2O

THERE'S a new weapon in the fight against crime in Gosport. CCTV? DNA profiling? Guard dogs? Er, no. Water.

But not any old H₂O, mind you. No, the RN police have SmartWater.

They're using it to brand kit at the engineering establishment. Invisible to the naked eye, it can be seen ultraviolet light.

The SmartWater solution carries a forensic code which allows police to trace the true owner of any marked item.

When it's been used as evidence in court cases involving civilian police, they've scored a 100 per cent conviction rate.

Meanwhile, north of the border, military police in Helensburgh are trying to encourage youngsters to have a safe night out.

The MOD Police-run 'blue light' discos are alcohol-free nights out for local youngsters of high-school age.

In the first year of running, numbers have risen four fold; 200 children now regularly attend the evenings which sees all 'clubbers' breathalysed on entry, plus six police on duty inside the venue – the Drumford Centre on the Churchill Estate – to make it a safe night out.

NAVY NEWS READER OFFER

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Locks, docks and two Royals

SHE is a 'tad' smaller than the Royal Yacht (by about 5,700 tonnes and 350ft), and the furnishings and décor don't quite match Britannia.

But for ten minutes, the Royal Standard fluttered from Her Majesty's Ship Express as the small patrol vessel carried Her Majesty.

The Queen joined the Wales University Royal Navy boat at Gloucester's Roman Quay, travelled down the Gloucester-Sharpness Canal, sailed under a new lifting bridge, negotiated two locks, and departed once the P2000 berthed in the city's docks.

And just for good measure, hot on Express' heels came her sister Exploit

carrying the Duke of Edinburgh (and flying his standard, of course).

The two university boats (Exploit serves the students of England's second city) made the rare journey inland to support the Royal visit to Gloucester's transformed docks; rather like HMS Vernon in Portsmouth, the site has been turned into a waterfront shopping/leisure complex surrounded by luxury flats.

The P2000s are normally found in Penarth Marina just outside Cardiff. They're the only RN vessels (apart from survey motor launch Gleaner) which can make it this far inland apparently – not that it's an easy passage.

First, there's the Bristol Channel to negotiate; it possesses the second highest tidal range in the world, making for

some "interesting navigational training". Then it's under the two expansive Severn bridges before entering the lock at Sharpness and 16 miles of man-made waterway to Gloucester.

"I've been around the world with the Royal Navy, done some great things, seen some amazing places, but this was a first – a real highlight," enthused LET(ME) Jamie Dougal, Express' weapons engineer officer.

The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh flew in from Windsor and joined their respective vessels (the sea boats were removed to create a little more space on the quarterdeck).

Thousands of people lined the rejuvenated quayside in

glorious sunshine as the P2000s glided in then sailed briefly around the dock basin to cheers and whoops from local schoolchildren, and whistles and sirens from boats in the docks, before coming to a stop outside the new Gloucester College building.

With that the Royals departed, their standards were lowered and the Beeb hopped aboard Express for a live broadcast for BBC News.

"It's been a highlight for the ship's company and the students who have worked so hard showing real team work preparing the ship, producing a polished and well-executed performance, not just for the Queen, but also for the people of Gloucester," said

Express' Commanding Officer Lt James Reynolds.

Royal duties done, the two URNU vessels resumed more regular duties: a sea training weekend for 24 students from the Universities of Birmingham and Wales.

Phew, we managed to get to the bottom of the article without saying that the boats managed to exploit an excellent PR opportunity for the RN thanks to their express delivery of two Royal personages...

● **Crowds cheer as HMS Express – flying the Royal Standard – enters Gloucester's historic docks with the Queen aboard**

Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU East



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YOU don't so much see a Balbo as hear it.

First it's a hum, then a rumble, a drone and finally an incessant roar.

Workers pressed against the windows of stylish office blocks lining Liverpool's new waterfront while thousands of people packed the pavements and promenades from Princes Dock to Albert Dock – a good mile. Across the Mersey they filled the riverside gardens of Seacombe.

Tugs on Liverpool's great artery squirted jets of water in appreciation. The city's RN university boat HMS Biter buzzed around. Even the Mersey ferry stopped to appreciate the sight.

This, at 2pm "on the dot" on October 23 was the Fleet Air Arm's signature display in its centenary year: 39 aircraft – helicopters, jets, propeller-driven – at different speeds, at different altitudes, all occupying the same vertical column of air.

For the past five months, naval aviators have been staging this massed fly-past – named for the Italian inter-war pioneer of aviation.

They began in London, where the weather, the setting, and the severe limitations on flights over the capital, all conspired against them.

They triumphed at the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire.

And they brought the curtain down in style on the Mersey, where they were blessed with an

unseasonably bright and warm autumn day.

For six days, the achievements of naval aviation past and present were celebrated in Liverpool as HMS Illustrious brought the Fly Navy 100 'roadshow' (or rather airshow) to town.

The carrier berthed in the shadow of the Liver Building, serving as the focal point, launchpad and viewing platform for the last major set piece event of the centennial: the Balbo fly-past down the Mersey.

The flagship hosted a reception for Fleet Air Arm veterans, local dignitaries and Liverpool's 'movers and shakers', with guests of honour the Duke of York, honorary head of the Fleet Air Arm, and Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar.

"The Fleet Air Arm of today still rises to the challenge. It is a credit to the Navy. It is always found where there is work to do," Admiral Soar told guests.

He reminded the hundreds of people in Lusty's hangar that "our squadrons have never been in greater demand: 80 per cent of the Fleet Air Arm is deployed on current operations."

Among those deployed squadrons are 845 and 846 NAS, supporting operations in Afghanistan.

One hundred personal and eight Jungly Sea Kings are in theatre and if a member of either squadron isn't just back from Operation Herrick, they're about to head there.

"I don't think that anyone knows we're out there – Afghanistan isn't even lead story in the news often," sighed Cpl Andy Firth, an aircrewman with 846 NAS.

"It's a very, very high tempo out there. There are lads dying, but Jordan and Peter seem to grab more of the media attention."

He has a point...

But then the Fleet Air Arm has invariably played second fiddle to the RAF when it comes to publicity. It is, after all, a much smaller force.

"If a search and rescue cab gets called out, it's always from RAF Culdrose," PO(AV) 'Cookie' Cook points out.

"As for the Jungly, the aircraft is green, our uniform is camouflaged. Unless it's a grey helicopter, the public think it's Army or RAF."

So why do it? "It's not a bad way to earn a living," says Cpl Firth. "Flying around in a helicopter. It would be nice to get some decent trips, get some of the perks that the RAF do."

The CHF personnel squeezed the Liverpool visit into a frantic training schedule which sees

"You look out window and see Merlins in front of aircraft behind not a bad office" – Lt Fr



YOU HAVE BEEN WATCHING... AT 500 FEET: 4 x MERLIN, 2 x SEA KING ASaC, 2 x SEA KING MK5, 4 x GREY LYNX, 4 x JUNGLY SEA KING, 1 x JUNGLY LYNX,

Valkyries

the Sea Kings scattered anywhere from Kenya to Norway, all in preparation for Afghanistan. The technical term for all this activity is "a bit mental".

So to ask the chaps and chapesses to give up a few more days of their time to support Fly Navy 100 events did provoke some grumbles.

**of the
see four
nt, twenty
d you. It's
ce to be in..."
Frazer Cumming**

to the waterfront.

Early risers would have seen (and most definitely heard) six helicopters lift off from *Illustrious* – one Lynx, one Bagger, two Junglies, two SAR (one painted in original 1969 Sea King livery) – to take part in the fly-past.

They decamped to RAF Shawbury, one of numerous staging posts for the Balbo (the Harriers came from their base at Cottesmore for example).

Shawbury witnessed an extra 25 or so aircraft

on its tarmac which refuelled then lifted off en masse before they merged in the Shropshire skies with the Hawks, Falcons and Harriers.

"The aircraft are flying at different heights and different speeds – 90 knots for the helicopters, 360 knots for the jets. It is very hard to co-ordinate," explains Cdr Ian Fitter, display director for Fly Navy 100.

"Only as they come past the ship do they all occupy the same airspace."

Which they did.

"To fly in formation with so many aircraft is a huge privilege – I've never seen anything like it before," says Lt Frazer Cumming, an observer with 849 NAS, the Sea King Airborne Surveillance and Control squadron.

"It's also a huge challenge. A lot of work goes into it, in the air and on the ground."

"You look out of the window and see four Merlins in front of you, twenty aircraft behind you and you think: 'This is my job.' It's not a bad office to be in..."

Some of the fast jet jockeys like to rile the airborne surveillance squadrons ("bag goes up, bag goes down") and, let's face it, the Sea King Mk7 is not a thing of beauty.

But then neither is the Yanks' tankbusting A10 Warthog – and it gets the job done.

"It's been a successful year from a Bagger's point of view," says Lt Cumming.

"A lot of people now know what we do. We've shown what we've contributed, particularly in Afghanistan."

The finale wasn't 'just' about that fly-past, however. There was a 'static park' – a collection of vintage and current helicopters on show in front of the Liver Building with current personnel explaining their jobs – and more than 10,000 Liverpudlians crossed *Illustrious*' gangway to tour the ship over two days.

"This year has put the Fleet Air Arm in the public eye, whether it's *Illustrious* in Greenwich, the service at St Paul's, the garden party at Buckingham Palace, or here in Liverpool," says Cdr Dave 'Tinsel' Lindsay, CO of the Naval Strike Wing.

"I hope the public stand in better stead about what we do – and we should credit them for not being quite as sea blind as we perhaps think they are."

"The Fleet Air Arm's future is out there, among the boys and girls, among ambitious, driven people."

And so that was Fly Navy 100. But don't be sad now it's all over.

"We're not 100 and out and back in the pavilion," says Capt Ben Key, *Illustrious*' CO, unequivocally. "We're 100 not out. This may be the 100th anniversary of naval aviation, but I am looking to the future."



4 x SQUIRREL, 1 x CHIPMUNK, 2 x GROB, 4 x FIREFLY... AT 1,000FT: 4 x JETSTREAM, 1 x SEAFIRE... AT 1,500FT: 2 x FALCON, 2 x HAWK, 2 x HARRIER GR9

pictures: la(phot) kelly mcalinden, hms illustrious, and des ashton



Picture: LA(Phot) Karen Williams, FRPU East

From Sheffield to Edinburgh

IT'S a journey which has taken 30 years.

Obviously we're not talking about the two great cities, rather the two destroyers which bear their names.

The sight on your left is one you will not see again: after three decades of refitting Type 42s, HMS Edinburgh is the very last of these stalwarts to enter dry dock in Portsmouth for a major overhaul.

It all began in the summer of 1979 and HMS Sheffield, the first of class and, understandably, the first to enter refit (the official term these days is 'upkeep period').

Helping to revamp Shiny Sheff all those years ago was a young Malcolm 'Mal' Fudge, a recently-qualified dockyard apprentice...

...and helping to revamp the Fortress of the Seas three decades later is a (not quite so young) Mal Fudge, now project manager for BAE.

The ships have changed substantially over those 30 years. Personal computers really weren't viable at sea in 1979, today they're essential to the running of any warship (as are their miles of cabling...). Phalanx guns were only introduced post-Falklands. Transom flaps – the underwater spoiler on the stern which increases speed and cuts fuel usage – are an even newer addition.

As the 42s have changed, so too has the way we look after them.

"In the early days of 42 upkeeps, the refit package was quite large and they were in dock for a lot longer than they are now," Mal explains.

"Today, the value of 42 refits is substantially lower than they ever have been for two main reasons: a reduction in budgets and a much more conscious control of what we spend our money on."

He continues: "We don't pull out and replace kit in accordance with life cycles – we now conduct tests such as vibration analysis to ensure we are as efficient as possible."

"Now we make sure that we only do the work that needs to be done. This really is a more intelligent approach to upkeep, and it has had no effect on availability."

For Edinburgh, there are some fairly major tweaks in her final refit: the Phalanxes have been removed for a full refurbishment, the Sea Dart magazine has been emptied.

The hull will receive a full survey and a lick (technical term – Ed) of the new, ultra-efficient Sigma Glide 990 paint and a transom flap will be fitted. Two engines will be overhauled, the remaining two will be replaced.

Reverse osmosis plants will replace the existing evaporators, improving the reliability of the ship's fresh water supply, the chefs, sorry logisticians (catering services (preparation)) will find a new range in the galley, and the chief bosun's mate has been busy with many seamanship aspects.

Edinburgh's ship's company has been whittled down from the usual 250-plus to just 35. They've vacated the destroyer for the refit (they're due to move back on board come May or June).

As the last 42 to be revamped,

Edinburgh will sail on until 2013; for the record her four remaining sisters pay-off in 2011 (Gloucester and Manchester) and 2012 (Liverpool and York). They'll undergo maintenance periods, of course, before they decommission, but nothing as comprehensive as Edinburgh's current overhaul.

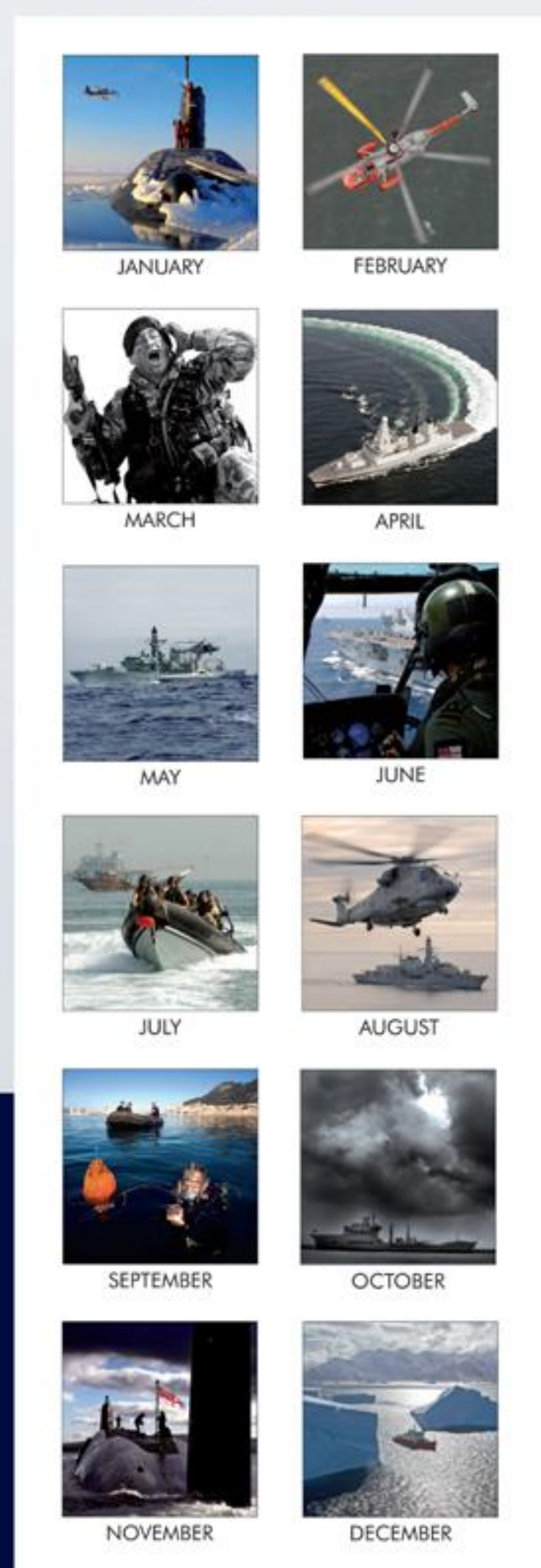
For a class of ship which was first ordered at the same time as the Beatles released their *White Album* (November 1968), the lifespan has been lengthy – and distinguished.

Mal put this longevity down to "the fact that they were originally good platforms to start with. All early design faults were ironed out pretty quickly. The money we invested in their support at the start was bloody good and meant Portsmouth was ahead of its time in many ways."

Although they're a bit of rabbit warren and a world away from their successors, the Type 42s still inspire affection which more modern warships don't necessarily engender.

"They are a class of ship that sort the men from the boys and there exists a real sense of community and belonging in the 42 family," says Cdr Alan Dorricott, head of Fleet Time Engineering in Portsmouth for BAE Surface Ship Support and former marine engineer officer on HMS Manchester.

"They are damn hard work but despite the miles on the clock they continue to serve the Navy well, doing an excellent job and remaining very much alive and kicking."



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The year of living Daringly

SHE weighs as much as the Eiffel Tower.

She's the length of 16 double-decker buses.
She can track aircraft over Paris or Manchester from the safety of the Solent.
She can shoot down a cricket ball travelling at Mach 3 (if, of course, a cricket ball could travel at three times the speed of sound...).

She generates 46 megawatts of electricity.

She's two and a half times the size of her predecessors.

Now we could fill a couple of pages with 'gee whizz' facts about HMS Daring, blinding you with statistics.

But oddly it's the little things which stand out on Britain's newest warship: the attention to detail, the lack of clutter, the change in mindset – things that the ordinary public wouldn't think twice about.

The media may call her the iPod ship (yes, it's cobbles), or the world's most advanced warship (no, that's probably not cobbles), but it's the easy-to-open bulkhead doors (no faffing around with umpteen clips), it's that wider bunk (an extra six inches in bed makes all the difference...), it's that third extra locker space, it's those few extra plug sockets for all your electronic gizmos, it's the end to communal showers/heads, it's the fact that no longer will you wake up in the middle of the night and whack your head on the sewage pipe or computer cabling running through your pit, that's what makes Daring different. It's a seismic shift in the way the RN thinks – and works.

"The perception in the rest of the RN is that we're 'new Navy'. This is the start of the future," says Lt 'Dick' Whittington, deputy weapons engineer officer.

Lt Whittington is 'old Navy'. He joined the RN three decades ago. His first ships stopped flying the White Ensign long before many of his shipmates were born.

Continued on page 24



January

Hello mum! Arrived in Pompey for the first time. Weather was grotty.



February

Our first meeting with HMS Ark Royal. Weather still grotty.



March

FOST came aboard to oversee safety training. Yippee. Weather, yep, grotty.



April

A spot of training cannon.

Continued from page 23

Despite such lengthy and distinguished service, he's never once appeared in these pages. "Cycle rides, you name it, I've taken part in it, but they've always managed to chop my head off in the picture..."

So, time for those belated 15 minutes of fame... He's our guide for a tour of 'his' parts of the ship – the weapons systems. So let's begin with Daring's *raison d'être*, the missile silo.

At present, it's empty – Sea Viper is still being tested. But even an empty silo gives you an impression of the size of the weapon around which Daring is built.

The missiles are 13ft 6in tall. Their silo is four decks high. Huge funnels tower up to the deck head to vent exhaust gases when the weapon is fired.

In layman's terms, Sea Viper is a cross between Seawolf and Sea Dart. It's vertically launched (Seawolf). It's got a bloody great booster (Sea Dart). But it's also got pif-paf technology (*pilotage induit en force/pilotage aérodynamique en force*).

Pif are actually tiny explosive devices which manoeuvre the rocket. Paf is the rudder system. Combined they allow the missile to perform turns of up to 50G on final approach to an incoming target.

"The puff comes when you launch it," Lt Whittington points out.

And it's a big puff. Apparently, "It's noisy, extremely fast, the vibration is tremendous. Pretty spectacular," Lt Whittington adds.

NEXT to the radars – two of which catch the eye.

There's the long-range radar (that big black slab turning on the aft end of the superstructure) which picks up aircraft up to 250 miles away; fire it up in Portsmouth, and you could watch aircraft landing and taking off from Charles de Gaulle, Manchester, or on final approach at Schiphol.

All well and good. But the long-range radar only gives you the big picture. You want to track that cricket ball travelling at Mach 3 (the gee-whizz fact always wheeled out about Daring)? You're going to need a more accurate radar.

Here's where the spinning egg comes in, that six-tonne spiked ball on top of Daring's main mast. In (very) simple terms, it allows the ops room team to 'zoom in' on threats.

How good is it?

"We can sit off Portsmouth in the exercise areas and watch a Thursday War raging off Plymouth," explains fighter controller Lt Alex Kopsahlis.

"You can see the Hawks and Falcons at FOST moving into position – well outside the range of the 42s down there. They cannot get outside our range."

Rather impressive. Until you come to fix the thing. It's housed in a very high compartment... well out of reach of any maintainer. Some form of mezzanine floor will probably have to be built so the engineers can work on it.

IT'S these shortcomings which you only find out about living and working on Daring. If the designers got that one wrong, they got a lot right.

A generation ago, a young Dick Whittington went down to the Falklands in Hermes. The carrier had 33 different magazines. Daring has a dozen – and there's the thing: the magazines are next to the weapons they serve, not five decks down and x-many compartments forward or aft.

"I think the only similarity with Hermes is the awful upholstery," sighs Lt Whittington. "It must be a challenge to find out how far it goes."

It's a challenge which the RN interior designers have risen to with aplomb for decades. Sadly.

Eighty per cent of Daring might be new, but not the décor. That patterned chintz which looks like your Grandma's tea cosy still adorns seats and benches.

Warships are, by their nature, er wary. But you also have to live in them for six months at a time – they are home as much as a place of work.

So for all the technology, for all those *Top Trumps* facts, Daring feels a rather sterile environment. Dining in the ward room is more like dining in a works canteen, resting your plate on a (very cheap) MFI table.

Now we're not suggesting in these strained economic times that we lavish thousands of pounds on swanky tables and chairs so a few chaps and chapesses with braid on their sleeves can relax in comfort.

But as a showpiece for the UK, well, you're left

a bit underwhelmed by the bland interior. Lots of white space, a couple of pictures of the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh, more white space.

SO, it's good there's all that technology to impress.

And nothing catches the eye more than launching the sea boat.

Enormous side shutters lift up (like a fanciful garage door), hydraulically-powered rail guards drop, then an 'arcade grabber arm' swings the RIB out, the grabber lets go and the boat is lowered.

It's all directed by a sailor with a control panel strapped to his waist, a small joystick to guide the grabber and a handful of buttons.

All that's missing is the *Thunderbirds* soundtrack...

It might look a bit over-engineered, but it's not been included so sailors can re-enact a Tracy Island fantasy, but to minimise the destroyer's signature (to prying electronic eyes she should look like a fishing vessel).

From *Thunderbirds* to *Star Trek* and the Ship Control Centre.

The SCC – typically a wall, or walls, of lights, dials, meters which break down a vessel's innards into schematic form – is most definitely 'beam me up, Scotty'.

Gone is the analog. All hail the digital as the watchkeepers sit behind three bulbous

Star Trek consoles. They perform exactly the same function as the old banks, except on a computer screen. A couple of clicks and you have all you need to know about the starboard diesel – temperature, pressure and the like.

It's the same in the operations room – which is how you expect a 21st-Century operations room to be. Not dark and dingy, but airy, and packed with PCs.

Operations room staff are faced with a bank of three large computer screens, keyboard and a big rollerball (which acts like a mouse)

"It didn't take long for the kids coming through at Navy Days to grasp the basics – click the button, move the scroller," says gunnery officer Lt Dave Thompson.

"It is extremely user-friendly. I like it."

There's a lot of such user-friendliness around Daring. There are hi-tech telephone consoles

(Fully Integrated Communications System) which remember who you are courtesy of a PIN number and allow you to talk to the people in your department, wherever you – or they – are. Hatches are fitted with sensors which report whether they're closed or not – especially useful when carrying out nuclear/biological/chemical drills. Sailors still do the rounds to make checks, however; technology, particularly in wartime, isn't infallible.

The days of the damage control board are gone. No more scribbling fires or floods on a diagram of the ship.

Instead, damage to a compartment is marked on a computer graphic of Daring – a graphic which can be accessed throughout the ship. No need to check with the various damage control parties to make sure that the boards are up to date, no need perhaps for the XO to rush around the ship in a battle double checking everything.

Instead, the XO is likely to be where he/she should be in battle: on the bridge.

And what a bridge. Its large windows offer panoramic views only Endurance or the RFAs can match.

Small though the windows on a Type 22, 23, 42 are, what also strikes you about their bridges is the plethora of blue-grey casing. It looks dated (even if what's inside the box is hi-tech).

ON DARING, black is the new blue-grey. It looks modern (and hopefully what's inside the black boxes is hi-tech...).

But sometimes decades-old technology can't be bettered.

In the growing gloom of an autumnal dusk in the Solent, the Aldis lamp on the bridge wing is fired up to talk with HMS Richmond, a good four or five miles away:

GOOD EVENING NICE TO SEE YOU.

A brief pause, then Richmond responds: TO SEE YOU NICE.

The Morse lamps aren't the only throwback to days of yore.

Daring's foc's'le might be enclosed (again to eliminate those bumps and edges which affect the radar cross section) but weighing anchor is still manpower-intensive. It still demands sweat and



April

A spot of gunnery training with the 30mm cannon...



April

... and with the 4.5in. Weather wasn't too bad.



May

Went in search of bad weather for helicopter trials. Found it, sadly. WAFUs were happy...



May

Bumped into our fellow Birmingham affiliate, HMS Exploit. She's a lot smaller than us – honest.



blood. It's still noisy, dangerous.

Other jobs haven't changed either. Despite the changes to the names of their respective branches between Daring's conception and birth, stewards are still stewards, writers still writers.

"The real change for us hasn't been Type 45 but JPA," says PO(Wtr) Lee 'Rattler' Morgan, a jovial Georgie with a penchant for pub quizzes.

He's one of 40 senior rates aboard Daring. Unlike the officers, the petty officers and chiefs have started to turn their ship into a home as well as a place of work.

They've turned their mess into a large bar/pub, complete with a bright maroon door and letter box just to be quintessentially British.

That mess is dwarfed by the junior rates' rest area. ET(ME) 'Hans' Anderson was expecting "something the size of a shoebox" when it came to the mess on his first ship. Obviously, he was thinking of Goliath's shoebox...

The 45s' junior messes are unique – but not just because of their size; they're also the first mixed JRs' mess in British destroyers... although someone forgot to tell the Daring decorators.

It is, well, a bit blokey. Russell Crowe in *Gladiator*, Tom Cruise in *Top Gun*, Bobby Moore lifting the Jules Rimet Trophy, Al Pacino wielding a machine-gun in *Scarface* – all these posters, and more, line the walls. It could do with the feminine touch...

"Listening to some of the older lads talk about the stokers' mess on other ships, we get the size and comfort, they got the close-knit community," says Hans.

"But the mixed mess is good – you do get into the spirit of all life on board, not just your own department."

PO(MA) Emma Boswell concurs: "Having the messes together really does help with cohesion. It's not just a male/female thing. Stokers, weapons engineers, ops room all live together, and you have a much better understanding of what everyone does on a day-to-day basis."

She's in charge of Daring's sick bay – more a 'hospitalette'. Featuring a surgery and ward, it's roughly three times the size of the equivalent section on a Type 23 or 42. But Daring also has a 'quarantine zone'; if anyone goes down with Delhi belly or flu – both of which can severely

impair a ship's ability to fight – there are a couple of cabins set aside for those infected.

It's not the only vital component of a 45 to benefit from the ship's size. The NAAFI is less shoe cupboard (as it is on most destroyers/frigates), more Arkwright's store (minus Arkwright, G-G-G-Granville and finger-chomping till).

"It will take an act of God to get me off this ship – and even then I'll be fighting," beams NAAFI manager Wayne Lindo.

"It's probably the first ship we've been in where we've been asked about what we want."

And what they want is pick and mix, biccies, Mars bars, ice creams, even an all-day breakfast. In a tin. With a microwave to heat it up.

"The idea's to run it like an old-style shop," Wayne adds. "We've found that we're selling as much as on a 42, even though there are 100 fewer crew."

Darings, of course, shouldn't need recourse to visit the NAAFI. They are amply fed by a team of seven chefs and two caterers.

How amply? 150 loaves of bread, 42 gallons of soup, 2,000 tea bags, 50kg bacon, 1,500 eggs, 1,000kg potatoes every 90 days...

That's a lot of grub. Luckily, a lift links the galley directly with the stores, which means getting all the provisions for the day ahead is a proverbial piece of cake.

Indeed, thanks to that lift and pallets, you can store ship for three months in a single day using just ten sailors. No more human chains passing boxes throughout the ship.

On the down side, some important lessons from the past have been forgotten. There's no ceramic-tiled floor in the galley.

The result initially, says LLogs Jonah Jones, a veteran of HM Ships Cardiff, Exeter and Invincible, "was a deck like an ice rink. A number of chefs went arse-over-tit (*technical term* – Ed) because it was treacherous." It's now been re-laid...

Oh, and the ventilation's a bit weak so if there's a lot of steam it can give the impression of raining inside the galley.

Still, mustn't grumble...

DARING'S CO Capt Paddy McAlpine bears these trials and tribulations phlegmatically. You should expect teething troubles with the first ship of a new class. You should certainly expect them in one where four fifths of the kit is new to the RN.

"It's not quite sail to steam, but Daring is a quantum leap forward," he says. "Sometimes I feel a bit like Captain Kirk. We are boldly going."

"People do need to have patience. There are some frustrating days, but there are others when what we do is breathtaking."

Daring isn't the first RN ship propelled through the waters electrically – but she takes the concept to the next level. The generators on Albion and Bulwark provide in excess of six megawatts. Times that by seven (and a bit) on Daring. Forty-six megawatts to be precise. That's enough to keep the people of Lincoln powered up... all 100,000 of them.

As she's driven by electrical motors, there's no gearbox – one fewer (very large and expensive) working part to worry about.

But in place of the gearbox, there's a new Achilles' heel: the GTA lubrication oil skid which ensures the alternator is well oiled. If it packs up, so too the alternator, which means no power, which means dead duck Daring.

"It's the nightmare scenario," says LET(ME) Ginge Cannon. "To replace it would be a hell of a job."

So it's one piece of kit the engineers keep a very close eye on. Not that they ignore the other engines and machinery buzzing and whirring away.

"Compared with a 42, it's clean," says Ginge. "Compared with a carrier it's quiet."

How quiet? Well, you can actually hear pipes over the public address system. You can actually hold a conversation without yelling.

"People are the most important part of the ship. Without them, we'd be far behind where we are today."
– PO Lee 'Rattler' Morgan



June

HMS Sceptre had us in her sights. Thankfully, she didn't pull the trigger.



July

Commissioning day! Fairly grotty weather! Countess of Wessex looked nice though.



September

Our first Navy Days. It was busy!



September

Our first taste of freedom! The people of Birmingham awarded us their highest honour.



October

First and the last! We ran into HMS York off Plymouth. Not literally, obviously...

The right thing in 'bling' Christmas visit from St Elmo

I AM sorry to bring the 'bling' subject up, as I know from reading *Navy News* that it has been a bone of contention for quite a few months, perhaps years, and most people may be getting fed up with reading so much about it.

As an ex-serviceman of 20 years, I can understand the problems we are having as regards 'blings', however I think I may have a solution to it.

Recently at a Royal British Legion parade in Northern Ireland I noted that quite a few of the old and not-so-old had these 'blings' on their chest, some on the right side (correct procedure) and some on the left, next to campaign medals.

In fact I noted that a few who didn't have a campaign medal had 'blings' to make up the deficit.

It is apparent that the RBL or Naval Associations have no regulations as regards the wearing of these so-called medals, otherwise we wouldn't have this problem.

Why then don't the RBL and Associations bring out guidelines?

They could then tell their members that they either wear them correctly, or not at all.

I'm sure if someone sat down and wrote the regulations we could sort out these 'bling' wearers.

I have no problems with these medals as I have eight medals all presented to me on behalf of the Queen.

— Ray Spence

Bragging rights for chipper chief

HAVING just passed the board, I am due to be promoted to Chief Petty Officer in the very near future.

I was wondering if I will be the youngest Chief in the RN?

I'm 23 (11/08/86) and was curious to know if there were any younger than me, so if not, I may have some bragging rights!

Do any readers have information on this?

— Robert Frost, PO(CT) JSSU Scarborough

Do you know where I am?

I REFER to page 7 of the November issue and wish to draw your attention to a major mistake.

Kirkcudbright is in Kirkcudbrightshire and not in Dumfriesshire.

The area is often known as Dumfries and Galloway, but to the best of my knowledge, Dumfriesshire has no range for the services to train at.

— P Need, Dalbeattie, Kirkcudbrightshire

IT WAS 1943 and our convoy was on its way to Murmansk. Suddenly, from nowhere, flashing fire outlined my gloved hands and danced around the rim of a signal lamp.

Amazed, I glanced about me. The ship's bridge was aglow with miniature sparklers. Every edge, every projection was alive with dancing silver.

The bridge staff's head and shoulders were covered in sparklers, we looked like incandescent gnomes.

The mast was a breathtaking sight. Etched in silver light it stood out against the backdrop of the night like a giant Christmas tree.

For the brief few moments the war and the U-boats were forgotten as delighted officers, lookouts and gun crews marvelled at the phenomenon.

Then without warning, it disappeared... as if an ethereal hand had pulled a switch, leaving us to the black Arctic night as the convoy ploughed northwards to Russia.

Note: St Elmo's Fire – an electrical discharge on tall objects at sea, or tops of trees, usually occurring during stormy weather (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

— Maurice Cross, Keynsham, Bristol



Picture: PO Robbie Hodgson

Clearing mines with Caroline

OVER the past few years I have wondered what happened to the training ship HMS Caroline stationed in Belfast harbour (pictured above).

Back in 1958-59 I was part of a clearance diving team lodging on her whilst searching for eight controlled WW2 mines that had been laid in the approaches to the harbour against German submarines.

As it was a long time ago names have slipped my mind. We also had an old coal-burning BAR ship with us for working out in the channel.

When we left Ireland for our home port, we were pleasantly asked to help the ship's stokers to trim coal.

This meant shovelling coal

about to balance the ship, a great way to spend time on the Irish Sea.

So I am wondering if there are other members of that team who remember the ten weeks or so adventure searching the bottom and coming up with no success?

I made a lot of friends in that team and buddies, and buddies in diving meant a lot whilst probing around some 40 foot down. I should know!

I also noticed the article (*Navy News*, October) about the CD team working in the desert.

As an ex-CD I wish all bomb and mine personnel the very best of luck and this goes to all service members – keep up the good work.

— Ex-L/S Peter Fowles, Evesham, Kent

Bemused by Beehive

I READ with interest the article *Spirit of the Beehive* (October) but I am puzzled regarding the date of the start of the operations. The First Flotilla MTBs were in operation in Felixstowe long before July 1940.

There were three flotillas of MTBs built in the latter part of the 1930s by the British Power Boat Company; nos. 01-06 were stationed in Malta, 07-12 in Hong Kong whilst 14-19 (13 was not yet built) were destined for Singapore, but with the threat of war in Europe the boats 14-19 were diverted to Malta to link up with the First Flotilla.

With the outbreak of war in 1939 the 12 boats in Malta were ordered home, making the journey under their own power, although three of the boats which were not prepared for the journey were transported as deck cargo aboard the mother ship HMS Vulcan.

Unfortunately, three boats did not make the journey. MTB 06 was swamped and sank in a terrible storm despite three attempts by the destroyer HMS Dainty to take her in tow.

Two more boats had to be beached whilst crossing France due to 'P' bracket damage and props cutting through the hull as a result of debris in the rivers and canals.

MTB 14 was caught in a following sea which caused much damage to the foredeck and to the wheelhouse. Temporary repairs were made in Bezerta before 14 crossed the Mediterranean to join the other boats in Marseilles.

The remaining six boats crossed the Channel. The three boats remaining of the original First Flotilla were converted to become MASBs (Motor Anti-Submarine Boats).

The Third Flotilla, now designated the First were separated, 14 went to a private yard to make repairs whilst 15, 16, 17 and 18 were berthed in Gunboat Yard, Gosport (later the site of HMS Hornet).

These four boats were refurbished by a working party of ERAs under the leadership of CERA Davies, I was one of that party. When completed the boats

motored around to Felixstowe later to be joined by MTB 14. This was early in 1940 when I was sent to Felixstowe to take charge of the engine room of MTB 14. These five boats were the only MTBs Britain had at that time until they were joined later in 1940 by the Fourth Flotilla which were 70ft Vosper craft.

The First Flotilla carried out convoy duties until Dunkirk where two of the boats acted as guard boats offshore. However, MTB 14 was dispatched to a rendezvous on the outskirts of Ostend to pick up General Dill and the Belgian Royal Family. But, at the last moment, the royal party had a change of heart and stayed in Belgium to share the fate of their people.

The First had many exploits with the Germans. Attacking 'E' boats and armed trawlers in Ostend and in other scraps, several rescues of airmen brought down in the Channel and the rescue of survivors from three destroyers caught by mines in the North Sea during a Force nine gale.

The Flotilla was also engaged in mine-laying operations. During this time MTBs 15 and 16 were sunk by mines and 17 was sunk in battle.

MTBs 14 and 18 the last of the flotilla were destroyed in a dive bomb attack when returning from having taken a major part in a very successful blockade of Zeebrugge. That action took place in May 1942.

Many ex-MTBs and MGBs were converted to become C/T boats (control/towing boats) to be known as HSTS (High Speed Target Service) their main base being HMS Excellent, Whale Island.

Boats were stationed around the coast as far north as Scapa. I was privileged to serve as the Maintenance Engineer Officer of that unit.

— Jack Collings, Kidderminster, Worcs

According to Lt Cdr Ben Warlow's Shore Establishments of the Royal Navy, HMS Beehive was officially commissioned on July 1 1940, as stated in the original article.

Uncovering the RFA

COULD your readers help us with a project?

The RFA Historical Society is compiling a list of all personnel who served onboard RFA ships during the Falklands conflict of 1982.

We wish to include everyone who was part of the crews. That includes RN and RM personnel who were on these ships as radio operators, gunners, and of course the embarked flights, as well as the RFA and STON crews.

Unfortunately, records from this period do not seem to exist, as we have searched the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen and the National Archive, even approaching a university in Canada where a number of records ended up.

I would like to request any of your readers who served on a RFA to get in touch with me, so that I record their name, rank, and job, and the ship they served on.

Likewise if anyone knows of someone who served on an RFA during this period, please could they get in touch so that we can complete this project before our history disappears.

Thank you all for your help in this project – I look forward to hearing from you.

— Peter Robinson, Editor, RFA Historical Society, website www.historicalrfa.org, Belvedere, Kent

Filling the memory tank

THANK you for printing our request for information about the Whale Island Tank.

We have had a magnificent response from your readers, far better than we dared to hope.

Information has poured in and we are able to build up a very good account of the tank's time in residence on the island.

If a Mr Streggle or Steggles should read this could he get in touch please on 0115 965 3314?

I believe he lives in Lewes and has some information for us, but failed to give a telephone number and directory enquiries had no records that would match.

Many thanks and kindest regards to all who contacted us.

— Michael Harrison, Friends of the Lincoln Tank

Navy News plays Cupid

I WANTED to write to tell *Navy News* about my wife and myself and say a big thanks for introducing us to each other.

I joined the Navy on my 16th birthday (June 28 1977) and was still training at HMS Collingwood when I saw the penpals section in your paper.

As did a few of my class, I wrote to a girl of the same age and we became friends, writing to each other for several years and from everywhere I travelled.

Our friendship grew and we married in 1984.

In August we celebrated our silver wedding anniversary and if I hadn't read the *Navy News* we would never have met.

I'm sure we aren't the only ones to have achieved this milestone but thought the least I could do was drop you a quick line to say thank you for giving us the chance to meet.

In the times we live in good news isn't very common, so hopefully our story will be a little bit of good news for you.

— Stuart and Carol Lynes

Marine mystery

HERE WE have, not so much a quiz, but a quandary.

Are the Royal Marines 100 per cent part of the Royal Navy, or as some people would like to think, part Army and part Navy?

While ashore we come under Army rules and regulations, but when afloat we come under the White Ensign.

When all services are on a parade (except Royal Navy) the Royal Marines take precedence over RAF and Army contingents as we are a branch of the Senior Service.

Now, for once and for all, are we Navy or Army and if we are Navy, then why do we salute like the Army?

Come on Royal and Jack, let's have some answers, views and whatever.

Per mare per terram.

— Ian Campbell RM (Ret'd) Southsea, Hants

opinion

BUILDING the new Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers is a massive project involving 10,000 workers and 57 British companies. Jobs and livelihoods hang on the programme, so do the preservation and development of UK skills, expertise and innovation.

But the birth, far from being accompanied by general rejoicing, is proving to be a long and painful one.

Doubts about the wisdom and affordability of the carrier programme have dogged it from the beginning.

There are always going to be those who would rather spend money on hospitals and schools than defence of the realm, but in the case of the carriers bitter inter-Service rivalry has fuelled the fire.

The views expressed in *Navy News* do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Defence

It's tempting to look back to a golden age – that of the Dreadnoughts, for instance, when the public demanded more ships.

But let's not forget the equally difficult birth of HMS Invincible, conceived during such a painful period of political battles about carriers, fixed-wing flying at sea and indeed the future of the Navy that those building her claimed she was a 'through-deck cruiser,' albeit with a rather strange design.

Invincible looked like an extravagance in a period of national recession, but she and her sisters turned out to be a wise investment and a symbol that our country was not quite ready to give up its place in the world – as the two new carriers will also prove.

CLASSIC
JACK

BY TUGS



A long goodbye from US

I AGREE with Ken Holloway (letters, November) that once you pass through the dockyard gates for the last time you have to look to the future, take all your career memories with you and just get on with the next phase of your life.

Although I was ready for civvy street and wanted to retire, I believe a bit more fuss could be made of those retiring to pension.

It seems now that since my time many great strides have been made in looking after the needs of those currently serving and at last the veterans are now being recognised for their service.

What about the time in-between, the transition period between active duty and going outside after serving all your adult life?

My very last day after more than 24 years of service was spent wandering around HMS Cochrane as part of what was essentially a normal draft routine.

That afternoon I was handed my discharge papers by the Leading Writer in the Release Office and that was it. Done, finished, goodbye – after 24 years!

No sense of closure and a kind of lost feeling of 'is that it? do I go now?' Once Navy always Navy, yes, but isn't that the whole problem that just isn't recognised currently?

I now live in the USA and my wife served six years in the US Navy. A few years ago her best friend from her time in the service was retiring to pension as a US Navy CPO Cook after 20 years.

We travelled to the Great Lakes Naval Base near Chicago for her mustering out ceremony. The base is the US's HMS Raleigh.

Family, friends and shipmates were seated in the Mess Hall and a couple of classes of new entry trainees were stationed at ease all round the room to witness this time-honoured tradition.

My wife's friend was escorted

into the hall by a colour party. A summary of her career and promotions was read. The CO/XO/HOD and DO all made short speeches thanking her for her service.

She was then presented with a framed commemorative diploma signed by President Clinton with a "nation's grateful thanks".

A farewell gift of an impressive, engraved nautical-themed clock was presented to her as a gift from the department.

Finally, the CO presented her with the actual ensign which had been flown at the masthead the day before in her honour, with a suitable announcement in Daily Orders.

The ensign had been folded into a triangle and was in a glass-covered, engraved box. It was all very impressive and a moving and fitting end to a fine career.

Perhaps we could learn something from our American cousins.

– Mick (Spider) Kelly, Retired PO Writer, Minnesota, USA

...I MUSTERED at Portsmouth Barracks to be officially demobbed in September 1970. I had just completed 24 years' service in the Fleet Air Arm, the last 15 as a Chief Petty Officer.

I remember entering a blue wooden door in the high wall from the street. I was asked for the identity card by a Regulating Petty Officer who then cut it up with a pair of scissors and threw the remains in a waste-paper basket.

After filling in a couple of forms and signing my name on some official papers he said: "That's it Chief. You are now a civilian," and I walked back out into the

street in a bit of a daze.

I'm not quite sure exactly what I had expected to happen but after giving my country 24 years' service I suppose that I expected at least a handshake and a "wish you all the best" or similar.

When I got back to the married quarters I searched for every piece of uniform clothing that I possessed, including shirts, socks, shoes and an almost-new raincoat, and threw them in our metal garbage bin.

I then jumped on the contents and slammed the lid down. I am nearly 80 now but the memory of that day still rankles.

– Jack Newman, Romsey, Victoria, Australia

...IN 1998 I left the RN after 22 years through HMS Nelson, where I had returned a few items of kit I had signed for, and my ID card.

I remember saying to the lady in the discharge office something to the effect of, "Is that it? After 22 years?"

This was before the Veterans' Badge, and I never received an A5 sheet of paper saying thank you from the government.

I am now living in the United States where ex-military personnel are treated a lot better than their British counterparts – they still get full medical care through the military, they get veterans' benefits when trying to find work, they have a 'retired military' ID which allows them access to any military establishment.

I don't recall anything like this being offered when I was in the process of leaving the RN.

– Keith Douglas ex-AB (R) USA



Skiffle riff JACKPOT!

EARLIER this year (Letters, June) you published a letter and photo from Steve Chinnock in which he was displaying a T-shirt he had designed as a member of 4VO Mess, HMS Ark Royal during the last commission of the ship, 1977-79.

Steve was a very enthusiastic mess member and provided us with musical entertainment with his skiffle group on a lot of Saturday nights at sea.

In this photograph (above) he is one of the group of bears during Crossing the Line, while playing his accordion.

This fine instrument had to undergo a decontamination programme following a banyan in the West Indies, where he ended up playing the accordion in the surf, to the enjoyment of a number of local youngsters.

My best wishes to him.
– Gerry Mitchell, Upper Beeding, West Sussex



A £25 Amazon voucher to the letter which amuses, impresses or enlightens us the most.

Don't fleece the Ganges boys

AS SECRETARY of the Solent Division of the HMS Ganges Association I have recently taken it upon myself to reinstate the promotional trailer.

This trailer, in the past, was displayed at many military venues in the southern part of the UK to promote our association, reputed to be the largest single ship association in the world.

I am now beginning to understand why the promotional trailer's activities were disbanded several years ago, as the exorbitant charges imposed by those that organise such events as Navy Days and Air Days at the various naval bases and airfields are outrageous.

We have always had to bear the cost of travelling and, in some instances, the cost of accommodation, which we willingly pay out of our own pockets.

At times we have been known to sleep rough, even though we are now all pensioners.

But to be expected to shell out up to £1,000 plus site fees is in my humble opinion totally unacceptable.

I suspect it's a mere drop in the ocean for the mobile catering units, etc, compared to their takings from the event.

But for us ex-matelots, proud veterans who are simply trying to keep the flag flying and memories of past services alive, it is a slap in the face.

Surely it is not going to cripple the exhibitors to allow a couple of 'relevant' associations to set up their stands for the duration of the venue?

I recently requested a site for Devonport Navy Days and was told that *two* charities only would be offered a free site, in an area the size of Devonport Dockyard – pathetic!

I have to say though that not all naval bases allow this disregard to ex-servicemen's commitments.

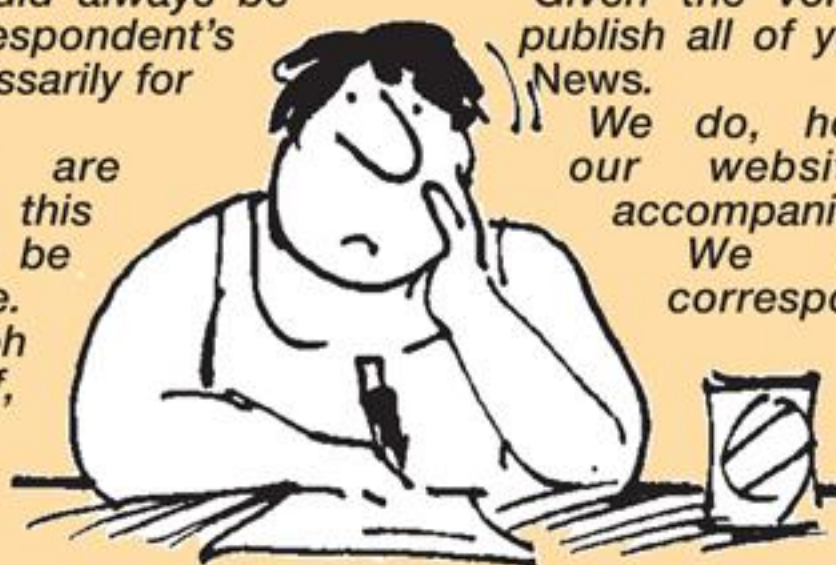
In Portsmouth we are welcomed with open arms, possibly the Senior Naval Officer of that base has HMS Ganges connections!

– Bob Campbell, Custodian of the Solent Division Promotional Trailer, Southampton

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.



Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



A FORCE FOR GOOD

Pick up a panto

AN entire performance of the traditional pantomime Aladdin at the King's Theatre has been given over to the Service and civilian folk of Portsmouth Naval Base.

The show stars Lisa Riley, formerly of *Emmerdale* as the Genie of the Ring, and promises fun for all ages.

The tickets are available at bargain prices to family and friends of staff – RN, MOD, BVT, contractors and lodgers – at the Naval base, and the pantomime is promised to have a Naval theme.

All profits from the night will be split between the Rowans Hospice and Seafarers UK.

Discounted tickets (£12) can be bought by calling 023 9272 5301, 023 9272 8791, or 023 9272 5678. Tickets can not be bought from the King's Theatre box office direct.



P2000 power

A TEAM of nine members from Bristol University Royal Naval Unit challenged HMS Trumpeter, a P2000 patrol ship, to a race with a difference.

It was metal against metal, but one side was powered by brawn and the other by brain (plus an engine and lots of diesel!).

The timed race involved nine cyclists starting north of Southampton, with the ship's starting line being south of the Isle of Wight. The distance to be covered was an average of 38 miles for those on bikes and the equivalent in nautical miles for the naval vessel.

The finishing line was Lymington on the coast of the New Forest and whilst it won't be a surprise to learn that the diesel-powered machine won, the wheeled version was a only pretty impressive 17 minutes behind (excluding the delay at the ferry terminal).

The purpose of it all was to raise funds for Children's Hospice South West, which aids both life-limited children as well as their families and to that end they donated over £1,000.

● Cyclists and ship's company of HMS Trumpeter

news in brief



■ STAFF at Portsmouth Naval Base have once again ensured that at least 130 children across Eastern Europe, central Asia and Africa will have a smile on their face on Christmas Day.

By filling these colourfully-wrapped shoeboxes (pictured above) with gifts for various ages the staff have supported the Operation Christmas Child appeal headed up by the Samaritan's Purse Charity.

■ THE soft side of the law was evident in Plymouth Magistrate Court when Phoenix Café staff, all volunteers, presented Hasler Company with £3,000 worth of games consoles and software, along with another £1,000 in cash.

Hasler Company, based in Devonport Dockyard, liaises with a variety of agencies to provide tailored individual rehabilitation programmes for injured Royal Marines in order to promote recovery and reintegration.

The Phoenix Café needs volunteers: if interested contact Mrs Edna Bishop on 01752 309787.

■ HASLER Company also benefitted from £350 when Rose Shaw and her neighbours down in Mevagissey, Cornwall, donated the profits from a table-top sale.

■ BRNC Dartmouth cadets amazed themselves when they raised £5,000 from an Auction of Promises which included the chance to be the College's Commodore for a day.

An additional £1,000 was added to the ship's charity fund when both Cunningham and St Vincent squadrons ran a 6.4km run: Cunningham led the way!

■ 705 NAS and a host of other aircraft took off from RAF Shawbury to take part in a flypast over Liverpool Dockyard as part of the FAA 100 celebrations.

Cannily, the RAF base had invited over 120 enthusiasts to witness the departure and they were 'encouraged' to make a donation for the privilege.

This resulted in £1,150 being donated to Help for Heroes.

■ A TOPPING Out ceremony (or, in non-Naval speak, putting the roof on) was held at Headley Court, the Armed Forces rehabilitation centre, to mark a building phase of the state of the art swimming pool and treatment centres, including a facility to analyse individual walking patterns.

£8 million has been donated by Help for Heroes and £3.3 million from the MOD.

■ SEAFARERS UK, the fundraising arm for over 70 charities in the maritime community, has joined forces with The Recycling Factory.

The Factory's collection of old mobile phones and used cartridges schemes promotes recycling in order to protect the environment, by reducing waste sent to landfill sites. Nominated charities then also benefit by receiving some of their profits, so it's a win-win situation all round.

■ THE 170th anniversary of the Shipwrecked Fishermen and Mariners' Royal Benevolent Society also sees the launch of their Christmas Card appeal. The charity dealt with over 3,000 appeals for help last year, funding anything from stair-lifts to fridge freezers. Visit www.shipwreckedmariners.org.uk.

A puzzling time for Harrier man

A LOVE of the great outdoors was used to good effect by Adam Wootton, a Naval engineer based at RAF Cottesmore in Rutland, when he entered the CLIC Sargent (Caring for Children with Cancer) 24/Seven Challenge.

The venue for this tough mental and physical event was in and around Lake Windermere in the Lake District.

It began on the Saturday at midday with each entrant putting together a jigsaw map, which revealed the directions to a mini duathlon and kayak across the lake.

The physical challenges continued with such classic events as obstacle courses and mountain bike trails, but they descended into the more eccentric, such as Frisbee Golf and even mathematical equations.

Between events the competitors had to solve a mini cube puzzle, but after three of those were successfully overcome, they were faced with the proverbial mother of all puzzles – the Bedlam Cube – as seen on the *Dragon's Den*.

A quiz, a few bevs and a warm bed ended the day.

Sunday morning began at 0630 with a cruise to a point on the lake which heralded the start of the orienteering phase.

The final task of the day combined the physical with the mental by making everyone float a ball to the top of a cylinder by extracting water from the lake.

Adam entered as an individual and in that class finished in fourth place. He is raring to enter the next one, hopefully as a member of a team this time.

The event has only been going two years and the detailed plans are deliberately kept a mystery for some time. From the last two events the charity is hoping to raise at least £65,000.

If you would like to take part please visit: www.24sevenchallenge.org.uk



● PO Shona Towns, the organiser of the Poppy's Charity Buns event, with two hungry ratings

Bun delight

BUNS and runs have been used for fundraising by the men and women of RNAS Culdrose. The buns were courtesy of 'Poppy's Charity Buns', a fundraising event held by 820 NAS in their aircraft hangar which proved a popular occasion.

The cakes, savouries, teas and coffees were very welcoming in the cavernous space which is chilly at the best of times...

But the really heart-warming part of the event was that it raised a staggering amount of nearly £3,000 for one of their Leading Air Engineering Technicians who has three year old daughter suffering from a rare cancer known as neuroblastoma.

Her family want to take her for a special treatment only available in the USA and this money will go a long way to making that possible.

Not to be outdone in the fundraising stakes but for a very different cause, came 750 NAS who had their own challenge.

Students and instructors from the squadron raised over £500 for Help for Heroes by taking part in the Jersey Marathon, either volunteering as marshals or actually runners.

The squadron trains Naval Observers, so to widen the

challenge the students had to navigate their way to the island.

On arrival they took part in adventurous training both in the sea and on the cliffs, which improved the bonding between them ready for the main event.

After helping set up the drink stands and barriers for the event the day before, the students and staff formed up into separate teams and took part in the race.

The Jersey Marathon allows runners to enter teams as part of a relay and so the teams went into competition against each other around the 26-mile course.

Bets were placed, with an age handicap for the staff team whose combined age well exceeded that of the students' total of 111 years.

The students, however, determined to deny their instructors a further chance to lord it over them, came in 12th out of 235 teams, with the staff coming a respectable 27th overall; just 14 minutes behind them.

Stirring times

IN FINE Naval tradition, Pembroke House's oldest resident Mrs May Harbour stirred the Christmas cake mix at the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust's nursing home in Gillingham, Kent.

Her able assistant was the youngest member of staff at

the home, 20-year-old kitchen assistant Megan Swandale – who just happens to be expecting a baby at Christmas.

For more information on Pembroke House, call the home manager on 01634 852431 or to find out more about the RNBT visit www.rnbt.org.uk.



A brew do on the Duck

IT MAY be a tad warm in the Caribbean, but there's still need for a nice brew. So amid their record-breaking drugs busting, the men and women of HMS Iron Duke found time to take part in SSAFA's Big Brew Up.

The Big Brew Up started with Saturday afternoon tea and scones on the flight deck courtesy of the ship's chefs (pictured above by LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson). Surg Lt Richard Rennie, the ship's Medical Officer, then auctioned lots donated by members of the ship's company.

Lots in the auction included: 'Be XO for the day', bought for £65 by AB(CIS) Simon 'Crackers' Jacobs; silver service dinner for 12 in the senior rates dining hall courtesy of the CPOs' mess, bought by the

30-man stokers' mess for £160; use of Commanding Officer Cdr Andrew Stacey's cabin for one night was bought for £90 by the only midshipman on board, Mid George Stabler; Lt Mark Heward, the ship's Navigating Officer, donated one hour of personal training – only to find it won by L/Cpl Rudi Taylor and Mne 'Chats' Chatterton, the ship's Royal Marine snipers, who paid £60 for the opportunity to turn the table on the navigator.

Surg Lt Rennie, who organised the afternoon, said "I was delighted with the response – all messes contributed prizes to the afternoon and many of the lots went for far more than I was expecting.

"To raise nearly £1,800 in less than an hour is fantastic."

Oxygen supply for runner

THERE are plenty who tackle the Great South Run, but not that many who do it clad in their full dive kit that weighs over 50kg...

Naturally being a diver, when asked why, AB Toby Jones replied: "The challenge!"

Toby's chosen charity for his ten-mile run was the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC).

Toby said: "A friend told me that this was a new charity from which Naval personnel and their families benefit, so this appealed to me more than the other charities."

He added: "Also the support they provided in the lead-up to the event was really good."

This was the first time that Toby had taken on the Great South Run, although he is a veteran of two previous half-marathons. Admittedly not in diving kit...

He admits: "When I told people about my plan, everyone thought I was mad because the kit was so heavy and also because I was going to wear a wetsuit."

"On top of this I was also a new dad to a four-week-old son Finn so I had to fit in training around looking after him and supporting my wife."

But on the day of the race, as Toby struggled into his full kit he could not have predicted the outcome.

"The support I got around the course was amazing."

"I had made a playlist for my iPod but only listened to about five minutes of it because I wanted to take in the atmosphere of the course."

"I chatted to lots of fellow



● AB(Diver) Toby Jones on the Great South Run in Southsea wearing his full dive kit

runners who were all very supportive of the cause – and amazed by what I was doing."

"I had lots of friends and family watching from the crowds so that helped immensely."

And that support was needed: "Although I had done lots of running prior to the race and walking with packs on, due to Finn's arrival, I hadn't managed

to train with the full kit on."

"After a mile I questioned what I was doing and whether I could manage another nine miles."

"But the thought of all the people who had sponsored me and the support I was getting kept me going."

"I had expected to take around four hours to complete the course so I was pleased to do it in a time

of two hours 34 minutes."

If you would like to pledge your support, visit the website www.virginmoneygiving.com/tobyjones.



Picture: LA(Phot) Gregg Macready

Ark rows the Channel

WHILST aboard HMS Ark Royal, the Officer Cadets from BRNC Dartmouth completing their Initial Fleet Time, came up with the idea of a team competition to row across the Channel.

As the idea took shape and gathered interest across the ship's company, it was decided to perform this challenge in the aircraft hangar using their gym's rowing machine (as pictured above). Naomi House Hospice was selected as the charity.

Around £250 was raised by the various teams, with competition being fierce as each individual took the hot seat. It was a close-run thing with the ship's captain Capt John Clink joining forces with a ratings team, but the wardroom won the race in one hour 45 minutes.

Familiar face at RNRMC

THE ROYAL Navy and Royal Marines Charity manages to pull off the rather neat trick of being both a new kid on the block (see above) and one of the oldest Naval charities out there.

While the RNRMC name is still a relative newcomer, its constituent elements – as diverse as the Fleet Amenities Fund, the Sailors (Tot) Fund, the Fleet Air Arm Benevolent Trust, and various others – have been around for a long time.

And lest we cause offence to one of its new joiners, Debbie Hampton (pictured right) is a mere stripling in comparison after a full career of 30 years in the Royal Navy where her last role was office manager to CINC Fleet on Whale Island. (She knows a lot of people...)

As her time in the Naval service drew to an end, Debbie was keen to make the leap into civilian life the right one. She said: "I'd been with the Navy for 30 years and didn't want to just walk away."

"I am enthusiastic about this. I think it's a really good charity. It is all about enhancing the quality



of Service life."

Debbie's new role is Funds Administrator for this unique charity that embraces the whole

of Naval life, and can be reached

on 023 9254 8093 or by email to

debbie.hampton@rnrmc.org.uk.

Does no one keep their clothes on any more?

IT'S December, it's calendar season, and there is, to be honest, an awful lot of flesh on offer...

First let's turn to the Naked Calendar – we're assured that it is all most tasteful – of civilian personnel from HMS Raleigh, which is on sale for £7 with every penny going straight to the RNRMC.

Sodexo's Lisa Jones joked: "We did one last year, but this year we got very naked! Although obviously everything is covered."

Calendars are available from Lisa on 01752 811652 or Michelle Saunders on 01752 811652.

Next to the Goodbooks Girls 21st Century Forces Sweethearts calendar, the brainchild of former Marine Mitch Turner

and featuring a former Wren, and several wives and girlfriends of RN and RM personnel.


People purchasing the calendar from the website www.thegoodbooksgirls.co.uk or phone 01752 546731 can decide whether to donate to the RNRMC, Help for Heroes or those other Services' funds...

And finally the Garrison Girls have struck again for Help for Heroes, with among others the wife of a former Naval man daring to bare all – artfully – for photographer Mick Payton.

Find out more at www.garrisongirls.com.


(We'd just like to point out that everyone is fully clothed in the Navy News calendar... – Ed)





NAVY NEWS

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'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Spanish branch cruises the Med

MEMBERS of Torrevieja branch enjoyed an autumn cruise in the Mediterranean.

The party voyaged from Valencia, 100 miles north of their home city, to France, Italy, Sardinia and Minorca on a trip organised by S/M Gerry England, the branch social secretary.

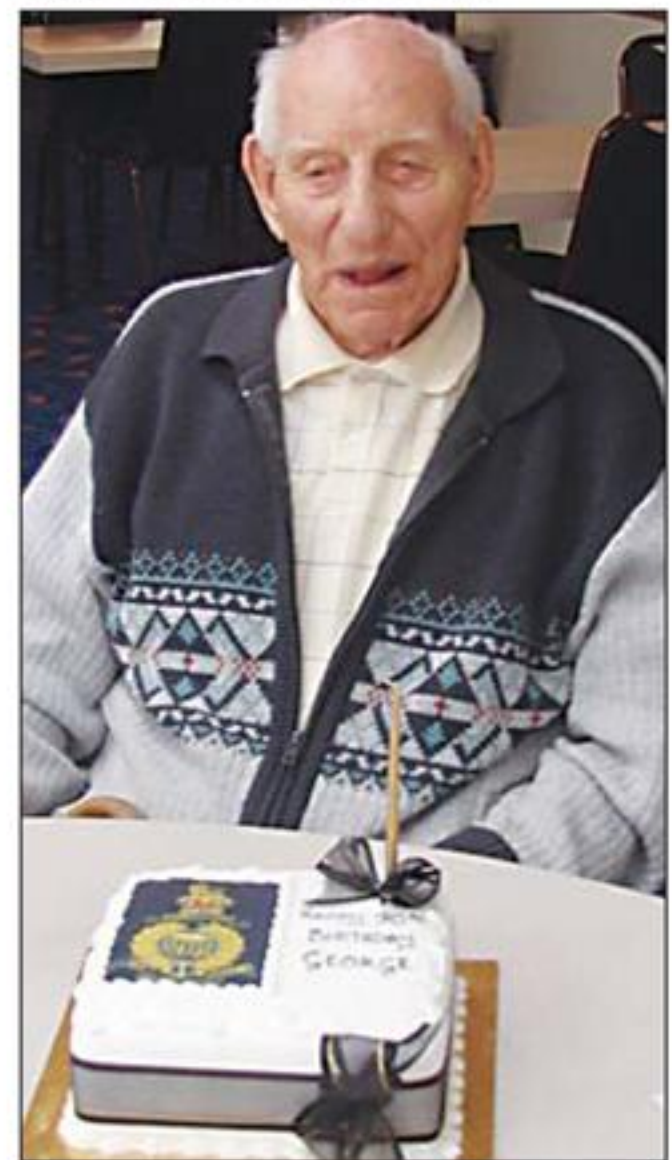
Members and their wives enjoyed magnificent weather as they visited various historical sites.

Several port visits brought back memories of various runs ashore during their time with the Grey Funnel Line, although on this occasion the members behaved with a little more decorum than they may have done when they went ashore in rig decades ago.

Shortly after they returned, the branch held its annual Trafalgar Night buffet and dance.

And as *Navy News* went to press, the branch was preparing to hold an auction in aid of Help for Heroes at their November meeting.

This year's Christmas party, in the form of a dinner and dance, will be on December 12.



● **Former Sgt George Francis**, who served in HMS Eagle 1938-41 and on D-Day landing craft as a cox'n, is seen preparing to tackle his 90th birthday cake at the Mount Maunganui Retired and Services' Association (RSA). Mt Maunganui is a resort on the Bay of Plenty in New Zealand, but George and his late wife Edna, an ex-Wren, first moved to Australia in 1949 before crossing the Tasman Sea four years later.

Local hero

HASTINGS chairman S/M Alan Kemp has hit the headlines – or at least featured in his local paper.

The former telegraphist with the SBS in the Aegean during World War 2 was the subject of a *Hastings Heroes* feature in the *Hastings and St Leonards Observer*, talking of his wartime duties – and a narrow escape from the Gestapo on an occupied Greek island when, in a café with his Greek comrades, he laid his head on a table to pretend he was drunk to avoid being questioned.

Men of Renown gather in Plymouth



● Margaret Green and Rose Southworth, the niece of a Renown veteran, with members of the Renown Association at the Royal Naval Memorial on Plymouth Hoe

A GROUP of veterans from the only battlecruiser to see action in and survive both world wars were reunited in Plymouth to remember their fallen shipmates.

Members of the HMS Renown Association, many over 90 years old, gathered in warm sunshine on the Hoe to lay wreaths.

The occasion was the 70th anniversary of the recommissioning of the ship for duty in World War 2 and attracted some 60 people, including family members and guests of the veterans.

The service, at the city's Royal Naval Memorial, was conducted by chairman John Roche (86).

"It is always a lovely occasion and we remember all the shipmates who were lost at sea," said S/M John, who spent more than five years on the 32,000-ton warship during World War 2.

"It was a very happy ship – she always had a good crew on board." This year's reunion also

included a coach trip to Bodmin Moor and as usual ex-Royal S/M Don Ligertwood decorated the Commonwealth suite in the Holiday Inn, and entertained veterans on two evenings with World War 2 music, including his George Formby act in air raid warden's uniform.

The success of the weekend has prompted S/M John Roche to reconsider his plan to end the annual reunion – despite the ages of some members, many well into their 90s, he said although the writing was on the wall it would be business as usual for the time being.

Renown, completed in 1916, was extensively refitted in the late 1930s and served off Norway, in the Med and on Russian convoys prior to 1943.

In that year she carried Churchill from the Quebec Conference back to the UK, and she ended the war in Far Eastern waters.



● S/M Maurice Hobbs

Maurice is Freeman of City of Ely

AT a magnificent ceremony in Ely Cathedral S/M Maurice Hobbs, life vice president of the City of Ely branch, was made an Honorary Freeman of the City.

To date only two others have been so honoured.

Maurice, delighted to have Joyce, his wife, and his son Richard with him, along with 27 other relatives, commented that Sunday lunch was a tad expensive...

He was supported by several shipmates from the branch, which he helped to establish some 22 years ago.

Maurice who was a telegraphist air gunner, was a great friend of Les Sayer, another TAG who died last year.

Shipmates know they can always count on Maurice to lend a hand – including branch Sods Operas, where his supreme role was 'Michelle of the Resistance'.

Coach firm helps veterans

NATIONAL Express laid on a fleet of coaches to convey D-Day veterans to London for what could be their last official service of remembrance.

Coaches collected more than 700 veterans, all aged over 80, from 20 locations and took them, free of charge, to Westminster Abbey.

Peter Hodge, general secretary of the Normandy Veterans Association, said: "We are so grateful to National Express for stepping in to help our members reach the last official commemoration of D-Day."

"The special coach services meant members could travel comfortably to Westminster Abbey as a group, without worrying about travel expenses or connections."

Shipmates honour Immortal Memory

EX-NAVAL associations in Derbyshire staged a busy programme of events for the week around Trafalgar Day.

On October 21 itself a service was held at the Trafalgar 200 Memorial, on the banks of the Derwent, which also commemorates all those from the county who lost their lives at sea.

S/M Tom Smith, Derby branch chairman, took the parade, S/M Baz Bowyer, Submariners Association (Derbyshire) chairman, was in charge of standards, Adrian Harper (RMA) played the *Last Post* and S/M Ralph Eales, RMA (Derbyshire) president, led the Naval Prayer.

S/M Len Owen, chairman of the FAA Association (Derbyshire), laid a wreath on behalf of the Derby contingent of the RNA, while Margaret Allen laid a wreath for her husband, killed in HMS Argonaut in the Falklands.

Almost 180 shipmates sat down for the Trafalgar Dinner, while Sea Cadets from TS Kenya performed the Colours ceremony and provided a pipe and side party.

The room was dressed overall with White Ensigns for the occasion and two superb model ships – HMS Victory and HMS Eagle, complete with air squadron, made by S/M Tony Ferne of Derby branch – took centre stage.

The Cyprus branch Trafalgar Night dinner, held at the Club Aphrodite in Erimi, attracted almost 50 shipmates and guests, including branch president S/M Sir Edward du Cann and Mrs Maureen Wynne-Hope.

Chairman S/M Andrew Noyes read out a message from honorary life vice president S/M Nobby Hall, who told of his determination to hold a proper Trafalgar Night dinner in the Turks and Caicos Islands this year and mentioned his success in persuading the Governor to propose the Immortal Memory.



● Northwich branch's final Trafalgar Dinner

Northwich closes down

NORTHWICH and District members have held their final Trafalgar Dinner – when you read this the branch will be no more.

The final dinner was attended by 18 members and their guests, and the branch formally disbanded soon after, as it had insufficient members to fill all the necessary roles of officers.

Members gave the branch standard a final outing at remembrance services in Northwich and Weaverham, and it was due to be handed over to the Middlewich, Northwich and Winsford Sea Cadets for safekeeping as *Navy News* went to press.

S/M Doug Shingler thanked members, past and present, for their friendship and support during his five years as branch chairman and 18 years as a member.

S/M Noyes then gave an overview of Britain and England in the latter half of the 18th century, which neatly set the stage for Col Trevor Brewster's fine speech on the significance of Trafalgar and on Nelson's character.

Sir Edward was presented with copies of two books, *A Life One Up on the Ocean Wave* by Charles Saxby and *The Crossing*, which was given to the guest of honour by the authoress, Faith Mortimer.

Back in the UK, Wetherby branch welcomed guest of honour Lt Cdr John Northcott RNR to their Trafalgar Night dinner.

Lt Cdr Northcott spoke of the respect between all parties at the

battle and mused on some of the difficulties Nelson would have faced under modern health and safety regimes.

The CO of Ceres Division HMS Sherwood – the former training establishment HMS Ceres was based at Wetherby – also outlined the role of the RNR in current military operations.

Wolverhampton branch held an enjoyable Trafalgar Night dinner at The Lindens.

Shipmates and families were joined by a party of officers and cadets from TS Newfoundland, named after the ship adopted by Wolverhampton in 1942.

A new award was presented for

Naval Quirks

DID I EVER TELL YOU HOW CAVALRY ONCE CAPTURED A FLEET?



.. IN THE FREEZING WINTER OF 1794-'95, A DUTCH FLEET WAS ICED IN OFF TEXEL ISLAND.



.. THE INVADING FRENCH SENT THEIR CAVALRY ACROSS THE ICE TO SURROUND AND, INCREDIBLY, CAPTURE THE FLEET!



Admiral, a troop of hussars awaits you off the port bow..



Oh yes, and I suppose Father Christmas awaits me on the starboard quarter!



● September 12 1949 saw 184 15- and 16-year-olds join HMS Figsd as Series 7 Artificer Apprentices. Over the years many stayed in contact, although some rather faded from the scene. However, memories were refreshed when 36 of the original group, together with various 'minders', met in Bristol to celebrate 60 years at a 'Diamond Do' weekend. Much swinging of the lamp was conducted, and recollections of absent friends recounted, with all coming to the conclusion that they really were the Magnificent Seven...

Sheerness placed on heritage list

A HIDDEN gem of dockyard architecture has been placed on a watchlist as an "international call to action...on behalf of endangered heritage sites worldwide."

Sheerness Dockyard, on the western tip of the Isle of Sheppey at the meeting of the Rivers Medway and Thames, was vacated by the Royal Navy in 1962.

At that time it was a near-perfect microcosm of Regency-period architecture, having been built and planned in one cohesive programme in the early 19th century.

The docks, boathouses, and buildings were conceived as one and planned with the aid of a 150 square metre scale model that has survived.

The dockyard became a commercial port, though parts of the site have been left untouched since the 1960s, while dozens of buildings have been torn down and docks filled in.

As a secure site, public access was restricted, and multiple ownership has further muddled the waters.

But with World Monuments Fund listing, pressure groups such as the Sheerness Dockyard Preservation Group hope that remaining historic buildings and structures at the site can be saved through a concerted effort.

Isle of Sheppey branch chairman S/M Mick Withington said he believed there would be quite a few old salts around who spent time at Sheerness during their time in the mob.

S/M Mick said the dockyard preservation group is looking into staging an event to coincide with Veterans Day in 2010, and further events are being investigated.

The World Monuments Fund, based in New York, describes itself as "the leading private organisation dedicated to saving the world's most treasured places."

It has sponsored projects in more than 90 countries since 1965, attempting to preserve important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe by working with all parties involved, from government level downwards.

www.sdp.org.uk
www.wmf.org

International views



● IMC delegates and their partners get a glimpse 'behind the scenes' at Windsor castle

MEMBERS of the International Maritime Confederation's Executive Council enjoyed a varied programme while visiting the UK as guests of the RNA.

The IMC took part in the Association's biennial march in Whitehall – the RNA is unique amongst ex-RN organisations in having the privilege of parading in Whitehall every two years.

This year, although still an RNA parade, sister organisations were invited to take part, including the Association of Wrens, the RM Association, HMS Ganges Association, HMS St Vincent Association, HMS Belfast Association, the Submariners Association and the Federation of Naval Associations.

Admiral Paolo Pagnottella laid a wreath at the Cenotaph on behalf of the IMC, while Admiral John McAnally did the same for the Association, and a number of areas and branches also laid wreaths at the same time.

The IMC delegates were in the UK for the latest Executive Council meeting, which was held at HMS Nelson, as Admiral McAnally currently holds the Presidency of the IMC.

Delegates from the UK, Austria, Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Italy (Croatia and Germany were not represented on this occasion) tackled a busy agenda covering the events of the past year.

That included reviewing the mounting of a very successful sailing camp near Rome in August – attended by six RNA-nominated youngsters – a comprehensive review of potential membership applications, the setting in hand



● RNA members and sister organisations parade in Whitehall

Pictures: Nigel Huxtable

of a strategic review of the organisation's aims and objectives, plans for a 2010 sailing camp in Texel, the Netherlands, and arrangements for the next Executive Council meeting, to be hosted in Vienna by the Austrians.

Business was interspersed with social occasions, including dinner in the Nelson wardroom and a buffet supper in the Senior Rates' Mess, both of which were also attended

by members of the RNA National Council, who were in Portsmouth for their quarterly meeting.

IMC members and their wives also enjoyed a boat tour of Portsmouth Harbour, a visit to HMS Victory, a trip up the Spinnaker Tower and a behind-the-scenes tour of Windsor Castle.

Delegates are self-funding throughout.

Historian seeks RN memoirs of the Somme

A HISTORIAN is seeking accounts by troops who served in the Royal Naval Division's battalions during the Battle of the Somme.

Hugh Sebag-Montefiore, who has already recounted the exploits of Naval personnel at Dunkirk and in the cracking of the Enigma code in his previous books, is now looking for memoirs from the forgotten heroes of the Somme – particularly those of the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division, but also of any other regiment's battalions.

Material will be used in his research for a Penguin book covering July to November 1916.

The author said: "The book will focus on the capture or attempted capture of the chain of villages and strongpoints which had to be overcome if the German line was to be broken."

"It will include coverage of the action on November 13 when the Naval Division's Drake and Hood Battalions, the latter gallantly led by Lt Col Freyberg VC, captured Station Road and the station near Beaumont Hamel, and when the Hawke and Nelson Battalions, and the Howe and Anson Battalions, all captured their objectives nearby, leaving the 1st Royal Marines to capture the German positions south of Beaumont Hamel."

Hugh can be contacted by phone on 0207 435 1035 or email sebags@hsmontefiore.com

The RND was formed in 1914 largely from RN personnel and reserves not required at sea.

It fought on the Western Front and at Gallipoli before being disbanded in June 1919.

Seafarers at service

MEMBERS of the City of Glasgow branch attended the Seafarers Service in Glasgow Cathedral, alongside personnel from aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious, Clyde Naval Base and Clyde District Sea Cadets.

Rear Admiral Martin Alabaster, Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland (FOSNNI) inspected shipmates from the RNA and Sea Cadets before attending the service then later took the salute as the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines beat retreat.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our October edition (right) was HMS Scarborough and the Yorkshire connection was HMS Whitby.

Mr Aldous, of Southsea, answered correctly, and wins our £50 prize.

This month's ship (above) was the fourth of five ships built in the 1980s for RN service in the Far East.

What was her name under the White Ensign and what is her name today?

We have removed her pennant number from the picture.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH.



Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Closing date for entries is January 15. More than one entry can be submitted, but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winners will be announced in our February edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

National stand is success

THE National RNA stand, organised and manned by stalwarts of the Plymouth branch, proved a resounding success at the Devonport Navy Days weekend, members concurred at their latest branch meeting.

The stand featured a display of RNA branch and ship crests and a collection of naval memorabilia in one half and a photographic display of branch activities (plus a very active Pusser's Rum corner) in the other half.

The backdrop provided visitors with an insight into the work carried out at HMS Raleigh during the initial training of New Entry recruits and centre stage was a fine model of HMS Scott, the Royal Navy's ocean survey vessel.

Visitors to the stand included serving Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel, many RNA branch representatives (from as far away as Oban and Dublin) and Plymouth branch presidents past and present, Vice Admiral Andrew Mathews and Cdre Ian Jess, all of whom enjoyed a hospitality tot from the rum barrel.

Branch chairman S/M Bob Shaw said thanks are due to Rob Anderson and the staff at Cellar Trends for the Pusser's Rum memorabilia, and to the Plymouth branch Navy Days team, members of HMS Raleigh CBM and Drake duty watch for making it all happen.



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MYSTERY PICTURE 178

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My answers



'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

Township pays tribute

ROYAL Navy veterans were welcomed back to their 'own' town when 60 or so members of the HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans Association travelled to Canada.

The Mayor of the town of Ajax, Steve Parish, invited the group to join events marking the 70th anniversary of the battle – and five of that group had actually taken part in the action.

Three were from the light cruiser HMS Ajax – S/Ms Sam Shale, Ted Wicks and Albert Large – while S/M Bob Batt was in Ajax's sister-ship HMS Achilles and S/M Basil Trott, who served in the heavy cruiser HMS Exeter.

S/M Bob travelled from New Zealand for the ceremonies, while S/M Albert was relatively local, having emigrated to Canada.

A further four men in the group served in the cruiser at other times, while five were from the later Leander-class frigate.

The town, close to Toronto on the shore of Lake Ontario, grew up around a wartime munitions factory, and was given the name Ajax in honour of the first major Allied victory of World War 2.

More than 700 of the town's 800 streets are named after sailors from the ships involved in the battle, and several of the ceremonies involved street name dedications.

A street name is officially dedicated when a veteran, or member of his family, visits the town – a total of almost 70 before the anniversary celebrations.

During this visit, a further 15 such ceremonies were held, including those at Wicks Drive and Harwood Avenue, the latter in honour of Admiral (then Cdre) Sir Henry Harwood, who commanded the flotilla at the battle.

The veterans were invited into schools to talk about their

experiences, and attended a gala dinner as well as a musical tribute.

There was also a formal welcoming ceremony, and the Hon David Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, attended the main event of the programme, when the 12ft polished black granite Ajax Legacy Obelisk was dedicated at Veterans' Point Gardens.

All around the town are reminders of the ships and battle.

The Town Hall, for example, has a collection of memorabilia which includes pieces of the Graf Spee and the bell from the frigate HMS Ajax (which is rung to mark the start of council meetings), while the town also boasts the cruiser's anchor.

Members of the town – believed to be the only one in the world named after a ship – are lobbying for either a Canadian or British warship to be named Ajax to resurrect the name of cruiser.

The Battle of the River Plate was the culmination of a search for the German pocket battleship Graf Spee, which had been sinking British merchantmen in the Atlantic – though her captain, Kapitän zur See Hans Langsdorff, was scrupulous in ensuring no lives were lost from the freighters.

Of the groups seeking her, Force G, under Cdre Henry Harwood, in HMS Ajax, spotted the German ship off the River Plate, which separates Argentina and Uruguay, early on December 13 1939.

In the battle itself, heavy cruiser HMS Exeter took a battering, and Ajax and her sister Achilles (part of the RN's New Zealand Division) were both also hit, but the German ship was also damaged and, harried by the sister cruisers, put into the neutral Uruguayan port of Montevideo for repairs.

At the end of her permitted 72 hours in port, Graf Spee had a limited range of options.



● Pictured with local MP Mark Holland (centre) are (from left) Basil Trott, Ted Wicks, Sam Shale, Bob Batt and Albert Large (seated)

She could attempt to move to a neutral, but possibly more sympathetic, port in Argentina; she could remain in Montevideo and the ship and her crew would be interned for the duration, or she could fight her way out.

The problem for Langsdorff was that the British were known to be sending ships, and intelligence suggested a powerful force was waiting just over the horizon.

The intelligence was propaganda – RN ships were several days away – but with ammunition running low Langsdorff took his ship into the estuary of the River Plate and scuttled her on December 17.

To maintain his and the ship's honour, Langsdorff committed suicide two days later.

● Town Hall staff are looking for cap tallies from HM ships Achilles and Exeter to complement those of Ajax and Graf Spee.

If anyone has a tally they could spare, please contact town archivist Brenda Kriz at the Office of the Mayor, Town of Ajax, 65 Harwood Avenue South, Ajax, Ontario L1S 2H9

● (Left) Jonathan Harwood (on left), grandson of Admiral Sir Henry Harwood, with the Mayor of Ajax, Steve Parish, and Mr Harwood's wife Susan at the street dedication ceremony for Harwood Avenue

● (Right) The Ajax Legacy Obelisk



Surprise date for Fearless sailors

TWO wives organised a surprise reunion for their husbands and former shipmates from HMS Fearless.

Beverly Fagg said the pair – Dave Fagg and Willy Sutton – were reunited with men with whom they served in the late 1960s, two of whom responded to an appeal in *Navy News*.

Others from the 1969-70 period – the time of a Far East tour and the talks between Harold Wilson and Ian Smith over Rhodesia – were traced through other means, one travelling from Edinburgh, another from Swansea.

A good day was had at the Still and West in Old Portsmouth, where – after they had got over their initial shock – Dave and Willy chatted to their old mates over lunch, catching up on the past 40 years and poring over plenty of old photographs.

The group has arranged to meet again next year, and hope to find a few more shipmates to join them.

Maidstone bid farewell to David

MORE than 100 family, friends and shipmates gathered to pay their respects at the funeral of S/M David Flander, secretary of the Maidstone branch for 30 years.

Seven RNA standards were paraded, and 40 shipmates formed a guard of honour for David, who was also the long-time agent for SSAFA in No 2 Area.

S/M Flander, whose ships included HM ships Indefatigable, Wakeful and Newfoundland, was a stalwart of the branch, and for 20 years had organised the branch's popular Sea Service.

Happy Jaguars

MEMBERS of the HMS Jaguar Association were full of praise for the organisers of their reunion and those who run the venue.

S/M Bogey Knight said the weekend, in Exeter, was arranged by Stan and Wendy Wright, and the group was entertained by the White Ensign Club in the city.

"I, on behalf of my colleagues, would like to make a special thank you to the club president, Cdre Mike Clapp RN (rtd), and his committee for their hospitality and warm welcome," said S/M Knight.

"Their generosity, facilities and organisation were second to none."

Heroes invited to return again

THE Big Lottery Fund is calling on World War 2 veterans to get in touch to secure funding for commemorative trips back to the places where they fought and their comrades died.

Since launching in April, the Big Lottery Fund's Heroes Return 2 programme has already enabled more than 7,500 veterans, widows, spouses and carers to go on trips, home and abroad, to honour and remember those who did not return from action in 1939-45.

Almost £5m has been handed out to date, and the current scheme remains open until January 2011.

Grants of up to £5,500 are available to pay travel and accommodation costs for such journeys.

Locations have included Normandy, for the 65th anniversary of the landings, memorial events in the Netherlands for Operation Market Garden, and various sites in Italy, Greece, Malta, India, the Far East and North Africa.

The first Heroes Return scheme, launched in 2004 to mark the 60th anniversary of D Day, awarded more than £16m to almost 40,000 people to fund commemorative visits.

For more details on current programmes, eligibility and how to apply, call the Heroes Return 2 hotline on 0845 0000 121, or see the website at www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Veterans sail with Little Flotilla



● One of the veterans who attended the Thames Cruise was S/M George Drewett, who was involved in the Dunkirk evacuation. S/M Drewett is president of the 1st Destroyer Flotilla 1942-45 Association – many destroyers were present at Dunkirk, picking up evacuees and protecting ships – and he is pictured (above) with a fox, the flotilla mascot

VETERANS of the Dunkirk Evacuations have enjoyed their day out on the River Thames on the fabled Little Ships.

The Annual Veterans Cruise, which includes lunch at Weybridge Mariners Club, has cast its net wider in recent times, as the years take their toll and particularly with the disbanding of the Dunkirk Veterans Association.

So participants this year saw action in various theatres of World War 2, although the first priority was to contact as many Dunkirk veterans as possible.

Appeals through associations and the media – including *Navy News* – yielded responses from as far afield as Aberdeen, and for many this was their first cruise.

Chelsea Pensioners, Normandy veterans, wartime submariners and RNA members also joined in, as did Prince Michael of Kent, the Honorary Admiral of the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships (ADLS), and the Mayors of Kingston-upon-Thames, Elmbridge and Spelthorne.

WO1 Mick Gentry again arranged for a contingent from HMS Collingwood to attend, and the presence of these 22 ratings,



● MTB 102 leads the flotilla on the River Thames

led by CPO Batts Battersby, was appreciated by the crews, veterans and the general public.

The 20 little ships formed up at Kingston Bridge, embarked their passengers then headed upriver.

They squeezed through locks in groups of three, giving the royal guest a chance to meet many of the Sea Cadets from local units who helped with lines and locking.

After lunch, the veterans returned to Kingston on those Little Ships returning downstream or in a convoy of classic military

vehicles and vintage cars.

The ADLS is returning to Dunkirk for the 70th anniversary of Operation Dynamo next May, and it is hoped that the RN ratings from HMS Collingwood can join them for the event.

Little Ships in attendance were: Thamesia, Tarifa, MTB 102, Bluebird of Chelsea, RIIS 1, Breda, Fermain V, Hilfronor, Wanda, Tom Tit, Gay Venture, Lady Gay, Papillon, Latona, Naiad Errant, Gentle Ladye, Quisiana, Janthea, Nyula, and Mary Jane.



● Drenched, blindfolded, 'injured' – and capable of tackling a vintage Wasp helicopter – students at HMS Sultan go through the engineering establishment's version of Operational Sea Training

Wet weekend on dry land

HMS Sultan's sea training is a hit

IT MIGHT be a stone frigate, but no reason why her ship's company should not enjoy the benefits of operational sea training.

Each term HMS Sultan stages a weekend of exercises which are designed to give young engineers and technicians an idea of what lies ahead.

And as it is training based on operations at sea, the title seemed obvious.

The fifth incarnation of Sultan Operational Sea Training (SOST) saw more than 400 Engineer Mechanic and Technician trainees and 50 members of staff take part in a hectic weekend of exercises, designed to give the sailors an insight into what to expect on their first sea draft, and also to support crucial RN principles, including teamwork, leadership, fitness and grit.

Broken down into a series of activities, each element of SOST involves physical activity and a degree of difficulty which fosters confidence and encourages communication, while allowing everyone to enjoy themselves.

A detailed schedule told participants where they needed to be at any time, which could be at a disaster relief exercise or on Ceremonial Divisions.

The disaster exercise included skills such as rigging tents, application of first aid, providing care to casualties and restoring power supplies, allowing

trainees to put classroom theory into practice.

They can now carry forward their newly-acquired skills, helping to equip them for their front-line duties.

Small-scale activities were tackled by individual groups, while the large-scale exercises required the entire cohort.

Activities included dealing with a road traffic accident, receiving instruction in search and rescue techniques and the correct use of emergency breathing apparatus, action messing, giving presentations and, of course, plenty of sport and PT.

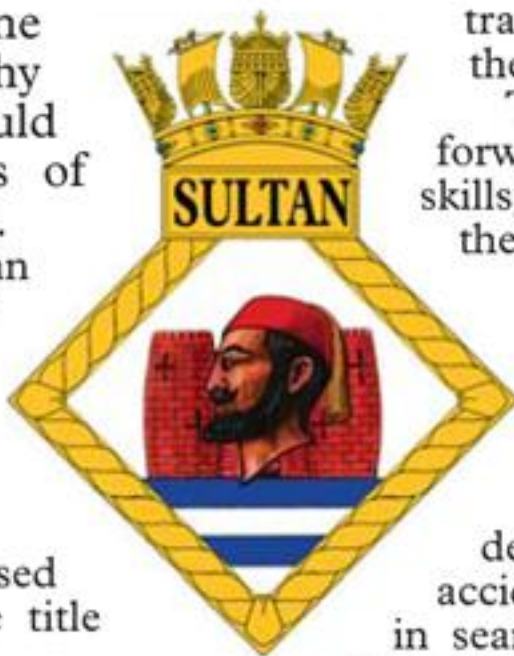
CPO Stu Kean said: "The trainees showed lots of enthusiasm throughout the event – even the early-morning PT sessions..."

"The weekend, with all its demands, is a taste of what being a member of the Navy can entail."

Feedback from participants has been positive, with many of the trainees from ETICC and 764 Squadron saying how much they enjoyed and benefited from the experience.

AET Daniel Brooks said: "It was a long weekend, but we all enjoyed every minute of it."

Both Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey and Deputy Flag Officer Sea Training Cdre Nick Lambert dropped in on SOST stances, and were impressed by the enthusiasm of staff and students alike.






The Armed Forces Act 2006 (AFA 06) came fully into force on October 31 2009, replacing the Naval Discipline Act 1957 with a single system of Service law.

All disciplinary proceedings beginning from that date will be conducted under the new law. See Galaxy 15-09 and DIB 44/09 for more detailed references.

Galaxy Briefs

Galaxy 13/09: Naval Manning Balance

Galaxy 14/09: Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) Review

RNTM

RNTM 187/09: Suitability for service in small ships

RNTM 191/09: Complaints against discharge by RN ratings and RM other ranks

RNTM 193/09: The Naval Review Fellowship

RNTM 196/09: Introduction of JSP 835 alcohol and substance misuse policy and testing

RNTM 199/09: The Nuffield Trust for the Forces of the Crown

RNTM 201/09: RNSFDO driver training courses for Royal Naval personnel

RNTM 205/09: The Naval Service Assisted Passage scheme

RNTM 206/09: The Naval Service Prizes and Awards fund

RNTM 210/09: Loss or theft of Naval Service identity cards disciplinary and administrative procedures

RNTM 214/09: Narrowboats Emma, Laffer, and Andrew – availability for 2010

RNTM 215/09: Caravan holiday park – availability for 2010

DINS

DIN 2009 DIN01-207: British Forces Post Office last recommended posting dates for Christmas 2009

DIN 2009 DIN01-210: Tri-Service arrangements for the completion, storage and disposal of Wills

DIN 2009 DIN02-016: Volunteers for specialist HUMINT duties – Op Samson

DIN 2009 DIN07-136: Joint Services Expeditions Trust (JSET)

DIN 2009 DIN10-040: Exercise Canary Gold 2009/10

DIN 2009 DIN10-045: Royal Navy show jumping and eventing team – dates selection 2010

DIN 2009 DIN10-046: Royal Navy Alpine championships 2010

DIN 2009 DIN10-048: Ex Mercury Snow Rider (MSR) – Royal Signals snowboarding championships

DIN 2009 DIN10-049: Royal Navy open badminton championships

DIN 2009 DIN10-050: Royal Navy theatre festival 2010

DIBS

39/09: UK troop levels in Afghanistan

41/09: Swine flu: immunisation for Herrick

42/09: Service personnel: Register to vote

43/09: The strategy for Defence

It's your 2-6

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the Royal Navy?

To feature in 2-6 contact Lt Cdr Heather Lane or WO1 Baz Cooke (Fleet Media Ops) on 93832 8809 or 93832 8821, email FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC.SO2 or FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC.WO.



News and information for serving personnel

A balanced approach

THE ROYAL Navy is approaching that impressive lodestar of manning balance – defined in MOD-speak as being between 2 per cent below and 1 per cent above the Defence Planning Liability.

Naval Secretary Rear Admiral Charles Montgomery made this announcement, describing it as “good news as our people are the single most important, flexible and battle-winning component of operational capability.”

He added: “This improvement is largely due to the hard work that has gone into a raft of recruitment and retention initiatives, but has been accelerated by the downturn in the economic environment.”

In short, there are now more people applying to join the Royal Navy, and significantly fewer looking to end their career early and venture out into the insecurities of Civvy Street.

The admiral does however warn that the successes in manning will not bring gapping to an end for several reasons.

Among these he lists the heavy RN commitment to augmentation tasks; the enduring structural deficits (*more MOD-speak – Ed*) in certain sub-branches, ranks and rates; use of the Margin – for example for medical reasons – in some sub-branches, ranks and rates is higher than expected.

The admiral pledges to keep tackling the causes of gapping that result in hardship on the ground.

He continued: “As our trained strength nears the funded liability ceiling, we must control overall numbers to ensure that this ceiling is not breached.”

The liability referred to is the requirement for specified types of trained military manpower, an agreed baseline set for each of the Services.

He added: “If we fail to do so the

resultant shortfall in funding would have to be found from elsewhere in the already overstretched operational budget.”

The intention is to use a variety of methods to keep up the strength of the Navy while balancing liability.

Needs within each branch will be looked at individually, but the expectation is that there will be fewer opportunities for extensions of Service, fewer full-time Reserve Service contracts and less opportunity to withdraw voluntary notices to leave.

However the point is stressed that all applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis and there will be a continued need to retain people in particular shortage categories.

Pride in the Service

ON THURSDAY and Friday December 3-4 the fifth annual Lesbian Gay Bi-Sexual Transgender (LGBT) Equality Conference will take place at the Victory Services Club, London.

With a keynote speech from Ben Summerskill, chief executive of Stonewall, and support from the Chiefs of Staffs from all three Services, it is clear that things have changed radically from ten years ago when homosexuality in the military was illegal and thought to “induce ill-discipline... and damage morale and unit effectiveness”.

This year the focus of the conference is ‘Out and In’ and is going to be on recruiting and retaining LGBT personnel in the Armed Forces. The military has got lots to celebrate.

2008 London Pride was the fourth year in succession that serving personnel were given permission to march in the parade in uniform; and for the first time all three Services, Navy, Army and Air Force, were represented.

This year was also the largest turn out yet.

Last year 2008 also saw the creation of the Naval Service LGBT Forum to match those already found in the Army and Royal Air Force.

These groups consist of men and women from all ranks and rates within the Services who are interested in influencing policy and practice within each of their respective Armed Service.

Many serving personnel have also volunteered to act as mentors to line managers, other LGBT personnel or potential recruits, if they need advice or support in relation to being LGBT and life in the military.

With the formation of the LGBT forums there has been a more co-ordinated approach from the serving LGBT community ensuring that LGBT issues remain on the agenda of senior management within the military and the wider defence community.

The LGBT forums have also been more proactive in meeting press requests and requests for Service attendance at events or presentations whenever possible.

The conference will hear from best practice in recruitment and retention strategies, have a chance to meet the Service Complaints Commissioner and hear from the chief human resources officer in the Royal Navy, the Second



● Participants in the 2008 Pride London march

Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey.

In addition it is also going to address the issue of ‘banter’ ie the type of humour that is typical within the Armed Forces and is seen as essential to keeping up the morale of a troop or unit especially when they’re operating in extremely dangerous conditions.

But it can sometimes be a thin line between the good-natured teasing, joking and repartee of banter that doesn’t offend anyone and crossing over into words or behaviour that could be construed as hurtful.

The Services have a rigorous policy on bullying and harassment but the conference will be looking at how, if light-hearted banter becomes potentially offensive, what steps LGBT personnel can take informally and locally to tackle this, without escalating the situation unnecessarily.

All three of the Armed Services work closely with Stonewall, a charity that campaigns for equality of opportunity and fair treatment for LGB personnel. It has also been a member of the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme since 2005.

As Diversity Champions, the Armed Services rank among other high-calibre public and private sector employers and has the opportunity to learn best practice on sexual orientation policy from other organisations.

There is still a challenging time ahead though.

A recent report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (*Beyond Tolerance: making sexual*

orientation a public matter) has found that some LGBT people have not, or would not, consider jobs in the armed services because of concern about suffering discrimination.

In fact the Ministry of Defence policy on diversity is extremely positive, emphasising that the people they employ are the most important factor in enabling the Armed Services to fulfil its mission to defend the UK and its interests.

Diversity is seen as crucial to operational effectiveness as a truly diverse defence workforce enhances the ability of the military to adapt to the rapidly changing global context in which serving personnel can find themselves.

Equality and diversity training is now mandatory at all levels within each of the three Services and special emphasis is placed on the core values of integrity and respect for those who are in any leadership position.

With a growing defence community who expect and have a right to be valued as much as their heterosexual colleagues, it is also not a time for complacency.

There is a need to embrace LGBT issues as part of the everyday business of the military and this conference aims to ensure that happens.

The conference is open to all military personnel, attendance by LGBT junior ranks/ratings is particularly encouraged.

Full details of the conference and an application for attendance can be found at DIN 2009 DIN01-193 released October 2009.

Trophy lives



TROPHY 3534 is a large oval silver bowl supported by an ornate column with two cast Neptune heads and two cast dolphins.

The bowl is decorated with anchors and lifebelts; around the centre is an embossed inscription recording its donation in 1911 to the light cruiser HMS Glasgow by the City Corporation, and the two side panels bear the arms of the City of Glasgow and the ship as she was in 1911.

HMS Glasgow was involved in three significant naval actions in the first six months of World War 1.

On November 1 1914 she was part of Vice Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock’s force of three cruisers – Good Hope, Monmouth and Glasgow – and the armed merchant cruiser Otranto which was engaged by a German fleet commanded by Admiral Graf von Spee near Coronel on the central Chilean coast.

The British ships were no match for the more modern enemy ships; the armoured cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau and the light cruisers Dresden, Leipzig and Nürnberg.

Both Monmouth and Good Hope were sunk while 1,570 men lost their lives. Spee’s force suffered only three wounded men – but he had expended almost half his ammunition.

As a result of this defeat Admiral Sturdee and the battle cruisers Inflexible and Invincible were sent to the South Atlantic; maintaining

radio silence they arrived in the Falkland Islands to take on coal on December 7 1914 and were joined by the cruisers Bristol, Cornwall, Caernarvon, Glasgow, and the armed merchant cruiser Macedonia.

The following morning Admiral von Spee – unaware of the presence of the British capital ships – approached the Falkland Islands with the aim of disabling the radio station and destroying the coal stocks.

As soon as his masts had been sighted all bar Bristol and Macedonia sailed and in a fierce running engagement Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Leipzig and Nürnberg were sunk, while Dresden managed to escape.

Glasgow and Cornwall chased Leipzig for over 80 miles before the German cruiser, having run out of ammunition but still flying her battle ensign, was finally sunk at 2123 with only 18 of her crew surviving.

British casualties were ten men killed and 19 wounded; the Germans lost 1,871 men, including Admiral von Spee and his two sons, but 215 men were saved from the cold waters of the South Atlantic.

Dresden, the last survivor of the German Pacific Squadron, was finally sunk in March 1915 off the Juan Fernandez Islands after a short engagement against a superior Royal Navy squadron – which included the Glasgow – and she was scuttled to avoid capture.



Gadgets at the front

PORTABLE DVD players, games consoles and solar-powered chargers are being sent out to Afghanistan’s Forward Operating Bases through the Operational Welfare Fund.

The Fund, launched by SSAFA Forces Help and the MOD, with sponsorship from Littlewoods, Woolworths.co.uk and the Daily Mirror, will have the gadgets and gizmos winging their way out to the lads and lasses in the thick of the action.

For the first time, men and women out on operations will have the chance to decide what the money raised for them should be spent on – and that can range from better coffee to an internet café and mess area.

The aim is to channel the massive public support for the military into providing those in the Service with the things that they need to improve daily life.

Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson, the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Personnel), said: “If people could donate to the new SSAFA Operational Welfare Fund, their generosity will go much, much further – and without the unintended side-effects of delaying personal mail.”

“As the fund is built up, I look forward to seeing what ideas our soldiers, sailors and airmen have for other ways that money can be used to make life on operations a little brighter.”

News and information for serving personnel

TWO
SIX.tv

Step up to small ships

YOU may perhaps have looked at a career in the Navy's small ships, but been discouraged by tales of cramped life and lumpy seas. Well, it's

time to take a second look.

Life on board may be cramped – but the other side of the coin is close-knit and supportive – in the older ships, but

in the newer Rivers you'll be enjoying the luxurious space of two or four-man messes.

Perhaps it's time for you to step up...

Tupperware Fleet. Plastic Fantasticos. The Small Man's Navy. All are some of the attitudes that have pervaded the fleet about MCMVs. But what is the reality of working in such a small world? In a word, challenging. The bottom line is that you are responsible for a lot more with a lot less top cover. With such a small team, the walk-on-by culture has no part to play. I cannot tell you it is easy, there is no space for dead wood, but the feeling of professional pride is supreme.

– Lt Mike Edwards, Gunnery Officer, MCM1



Joining HMS Penzance as DMEO, the change in responsibility hit me almost immediately. The lack of manpower meant that as a department we would all 'muck in' as a team.

The work was hard but once my crisis management skills were weighed off, I began to enjoy the spirit and ethos of not only the marine engineers but the ship's company as a whole.

Living in such a close-knit community as the MCMV squadron will always have its challenges but for me the mix of the highly professional crew with great responsibility at such a young age and the relationship between all ranks and rates makes this a unique experience.

If you want to get noticed and of course, feel as though you are playing a key part in the day-to-day running of your ship then this is for you.

– WO2 Chris Bradley, DMEO HMS Penzance

It was 0430 on a cold October morning in 1991, the Inverkeithing choo-choo (as it was known) pulled in and I was met by a three-badge AB diver who was upset I had him up at such an ungodly hour – although the choice of language was a lot stronger...

Rosyth was my destination HMS Brocklesby my first ship.

Modern day and all that sweeping kit is part of our history that will never disappear as you hear the MW rates of old spinning their great sweeping dits. Now it's Action Vehicle, Launch Seafox and me boring any rating or officer alike about our wonderful newest piece of kit called Remus.

The fact is we will never replace these plastic ships as the men and women who serve, have served, or want to serve on them will tell you – "where the Fleet is going, we have been".

There are no passengers on a plastic boat, you have to dig in, but your rewards are great runs ashore in places the Fleet can't get in, extra responsibility and a sense of real belonging not only in your mess but across the senior rates and wardroom.

Bottom line is – you're not a sailor until you've served in a minehunter.

– PO (MW) 'Fingers' Dumbleton, ORS HMS Grimsby



I joined MCM1 Crew 7 six months prior to deploying to the Arabian Gulf. It seemed odd at first that I was to join Shoreham then shortly afterwards have to move to another platform out East.

However having been through the roulement process, it is certainly not as daunting as it appeared at first.

Because of the relatively small size of the ship's company, it has also been necessary for me to get stuck in to all sorts of other activities outside my comfort zone, such as seamanship and damage control.

It's good to be amongst people who work and play hard – always as a team.

– POWEA James, DMEO HMS Pembroke



THE first step towards joining the demanding and rewarding Small Ships World can be to register your interest with the appropriate Small Ships Manpower Controllers.

■ Portsmouth – located on the ground floor of Lancelot Building, HMNB Portsmouth:

Fishery Protection Squadron Manpower Controller – CPO(SE) Graham Blick – 9380 26397, DII(F) FLEET-PORFLOT-FPSMC

Mine Countermeasures 2 Squadron Manpower Controller – CPO(MW) Chris Christian – 9380 20783, DII(F) FLEET-PORFLOT-MCM2

■ Faslane – located in room 305 on the first floor of Admin

Building, HMNB Clyde:

Mine Countermeasures

1 Squadron Manpower

Controller – CPO(MW)

Al Innes – 93255 6627,

DII(F) FLEET FASLOT-

MCM1CMSup2

■ Devonport – Located

in Tyne Building, HMNB

Devonport: contact your

branch Career Manager

All should liaise directly

with your DO or EWO

and inform them of your

aspirations to join the Small

Ships organisation.

They will advise the next step

and will help you to complete

an E240 Drafting Preference

Proforma.

My small ship story began with the devastating news that after selecting small ships I would be sent to Faslane. Faslane! With a steady resolve I thanked the appointer for sending me to purgatory. The truth was far removed.

Aside from the rain, summer in Scotland is exceptionally beautiful. I had a new 'family' who welcomed me with open arms. Gone was the 'not my part of ship' mentality, and in was a whole ship craze.

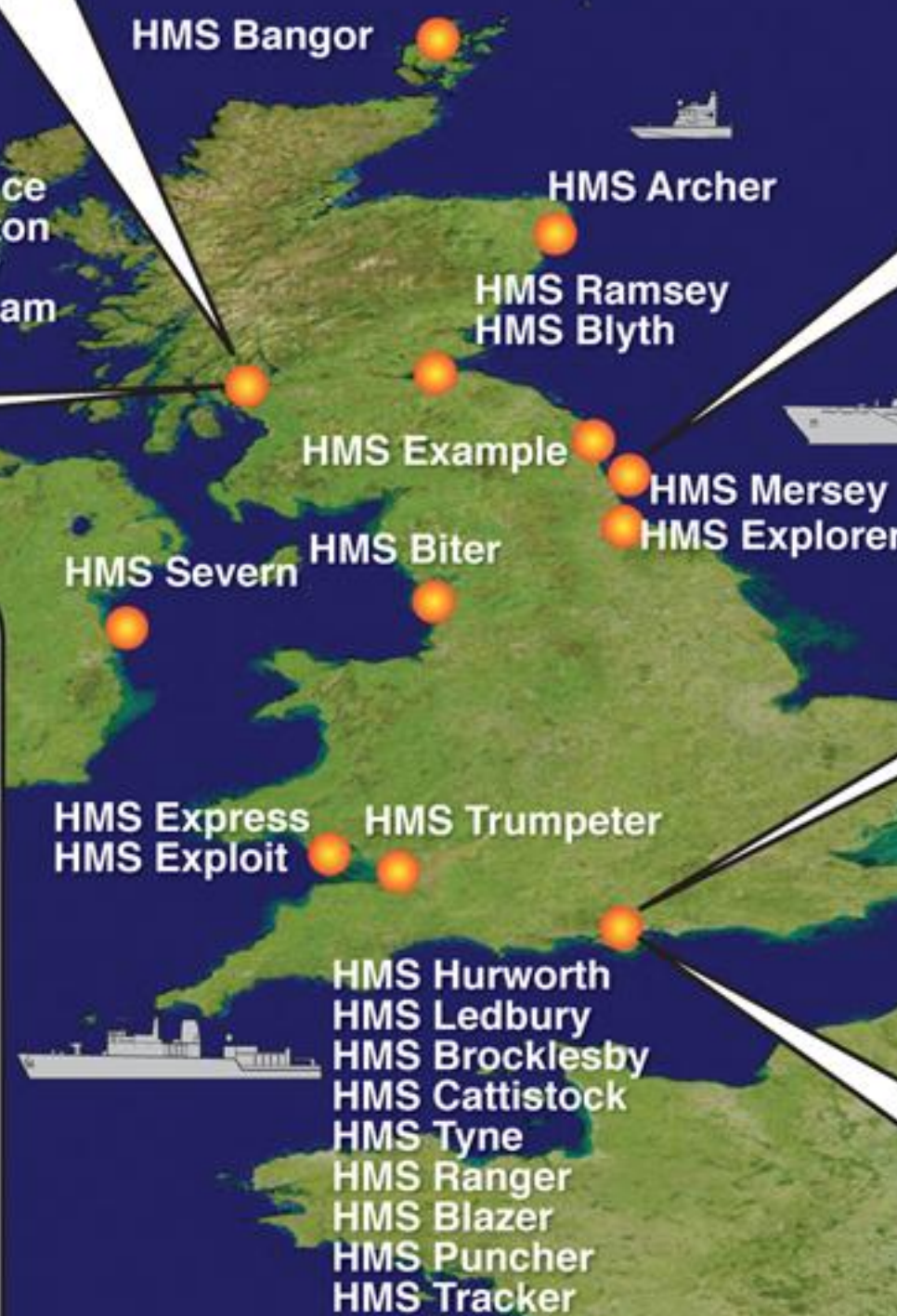
I can only liken a small ship to running your own business. You literally have to step up to owning all that you do.

The hours were initially daunting, but once settled into the rhythm the reward was tenfold that of my big ship experience.

The level and trust and respect earned by each member of the ship's company is fantastic.

And the runs ashore during my small ship experience have been the best of my career.

– Lt Tom Worley, XO HMS Grimsby



I prefer working on smaller ships. The living accommodation is much better – a two-man cabin with en-suite shower.

Being at sea every four weeks out of six means I enjoy the benefits of sea pay.

I prefer smaller ships because of the trust onboard. I am a member of a close-knit working team.

Lastly leave – I have watch leave every two out of six weeks, when I can spend quality time at home with my friends and family.

– ET (ME) Steve Langdon, HMS Mersey



I have found small ships incredibly rewarding. Small ships often push you to the limits as there are fewer to share the burden. There are those who believe that they won't see the world serving in small ships, but during my time in Brocklesby, Middleton and Blazer I have deployed to the US, the Baltic and the Gulf.

I'm looking forward to the Baltic again next year, and at only 20 metres, Blazer gets into places that bigger ships will never get to see.

– LET (ME) Laidlan, WEO HMS Blazer

XO onboard is a demanding job, challenging but not always rewarding as the promotional prospect is limited as you are out of your source branch – but the good thing is that in the absence of the COs who are at their respective units, you have your own train-set to play with. You run all the routines.

The students are good fun to work with as they come from all sorts of backgrounds and are very keen.

Should anyone wish to pursue a break from mundane routines of the big ship Navy then the P2000s are a must! They are not everyone's cup of tea but enjoyable, with two small deployments a year.

The only frustrating thing on a P2000 is although it's a sea draft and you get your sea leave, unfortunately you don't get sea pay, which is annoying as you are on a sea-going platform and not quite getting the benefits that the grown-up ships get.

– CPO (SEA) J Cleeve, XO HMS Tracker

THE ROYAL NAVAL
ASSOCIATION

Once Navy Always Navy

What the Association does:

Supports the Royal Navy

Maintains Naval traditions

Enjoys social activities

Re-unites Shipmates

Remembers the fallen

Helps the disabled

Looks after the needy

Cheers up the distressed

Stands together in Unity



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Full Members

Consist of Serving and Ex-Serving members of the The Naval Service, WRNS, RFA, RNXS and RMAS, regardless of Rank. Any person who served in the Naval Forces of a nation which is or was a member of the British Commonwealth.

Associate Members

Those in sympathy with our Objects, especially families.

Contact Nigel Huxtable at RNA HQ

Rm 209 Semaphore Tower, PP70, HM Naval Base, PORTSMOUTH PO1 3LT

Phone - 023 9272 3747 E-Mail - Nigel@royalnavalassoc.com

Website - www.royal-naval-association.com

Unity, Loyalty, Patriotism and Comradeship

TWO
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News and information



News and information for serving personnel

Get the big picture

IT HAS been a very busy year for the Naval Families Federation, and we would like to thank everyone for their contributions and comments over the last 12 months, writes Jane Williams of the NFF.

Without the invaluable contact from Royal Navy and Royal Marines families the people who need to hear about your experiences only get part of the picture of how life within the Naval community really is.

Some of the current timely topics that are under discussion:

■ **Voting from around the world**

In order to make sure that you have your say in the next round of elections it is important to make sure that you don't miss your opportunity to cast your vote and are registered to make your ballot count.

For more information go to http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/register_to_vote/armed_forces.aspx

■ **Housing Information Centres**

HICs now have access to the JPA main computer system and are able to identify all Service personnel currently occupying Service Families Accommodation (SFA); including those who have applied for discharge and those who have received posting notices.

HIC staff are therefore fully aware of who is entitled to a quarter, when and where, and this is helping with supply and demand.

■ **The Welfare Pathway**

The Welfare Pathway gives further support to the Armed Forces community by offering a point of contact and advice to unlock information on the welfare and support available to them – both statutory and from the third sector (charities).

The Armed Forces community will be able to get advice on such things as priority healthcare, housing and education as well as link in with Service and veterans charities and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

The pathway was launched in a ceremony attended by Under Secretary of State for Defence and Minister for Veterans Kevan Jones and senior representatives of Kent County Council. Kent County Council is the first local authority to pilot the Welfare Pathway.

Members of the Armed Forces community will be able to access advice on their entitlements by visiting the council's Gateway centres across Kent, which are partnerships between county and district councils that include the National Health Service and voluntary and community organisations.

A national helpline for Armed Forces personnel to get advice and direction on how best to access the help and welfare support due to them is also available on 08000 223366.

■ **Retrospective recovery of charges**

JPA have identified what they believe to be a vast number of loss and damage charges, which have not been debited from some people's pay accounts.

Some of these charges date back as far as early 2007 and have been incurred for things such as railcards, cash clothing and loss of stores charges.

SPVA intended to debit these charges in October's pay. All personnel are advised to check their pay statement carefully and if you are debited for a cost which you believe you have previously paid, contact your UPO Administrator for advice on the reimbursement procedure.

■ **RNCOM**

For details of community events throughout the UK and details of recording a message for broadcast on BFBS to deployed loved ones during the Christmas period, then take a look at the RNCOM website: rncom.mod.uk

■ **Armed Forces Compensation Scheme**

If you don't know about the provisions made

within the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, you may like to look into it further as it encompasses a wide criteria for claims including injury, illness or death in Service.

Detailed information is contained in JSP 765.

■ **Schools admissions**

As part of any move, finding a school place is vitally important and the Children's Advisory Education Service (CEAS) is the first point of call for expert information; however, feedback on where the system could be improved is needed.

During a recent meeting looking at potential improvements to the admissions system, the desire to hear from families about their experiences and suggestions was clearly highlighted, so whatever comments you have we would like to hear them.

■ **SFA under the microscope**

The findings of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee Report (PACR) on Service Families Accommodation has been released.

Here are some of the headlines following the NAO survey of 12,427 Armed Forces families

● Almost a third of families describe the condition of their house as "poor".

● Over a third were dissatisfied with the cleanliness of their property on moving in.

● Nearly a quarter of families consider their properties to be poorly maintained.

● The department's entitlement system is complex, and Service personnel have limited ability to request a property outside their strict entitlement.

● Families receive very limited information about their property when allocated.

● The department needs to develop better mechanisms for communicating with occupants.

We attend a number of meetings with ministers, Defence Estates and Modern Housing Solutions on your behalf.

Housing is our biggest issue – 38 per cent of all enquiries centre on housing. Considering the small proportion of our families living in Service Families Accommodation that does not sit comfortably in the NFF office.

There is definitely a willingness to do more and improve the state of 'the estate'.

What's the answer? Well in a nutshell, more investment in Service Families Accommodation combined with more accessible and affordable home purchase schemes would seem to be a good start!

What do you think? Comments please...

■ **Winter heating**

A message from MHS – Modern Housing Solutions is pleased to advise that its helpdesk will continue to be open 24/7 throughout the festive holiday period. We do encourage occupants with repairs to report to do so well in advance of the holiday period however.

We would also like to take this opportunity to remind occupants who are going away to leave their heating switched on to the normal timed setting. Where possible, loft access hatches should also be left open.

These measures provide frost protection to the heating system and hot and cold water pipe-work throughout the property, ensuring it is less likely that pipes will freeze or burst.

The staff at the NFF wish everyone a peaceful Christmas and New Year, and look forward to hearing from families members on any topics affecting family life in 2010.

The Naval Families Federation is contactable via www.nff.org.uk, 02392 654374 or: NFF, Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 8RN. Additional links to other useful websites can be found via the NFF Homepage.

From grey ships to greyhounds

THE new Greyhound bus service from Portsmouth to London has introduced a special rate for sailors.

All serving RN men and women will be able to travel direct to London for a maximum of £7 each way when they buy a ticket on the day and produce their ID cards.

The cheapest Greyhound fares are only £1, but these need to be booked in advance. Passengers turning up on the day without a booking can pay up to £10, but in that instance naval personnel will only pay £7.

In addition, the £7 fare applies to family members travelling with

Services people up to a limit of two adults and three children.

Alex Warner, Managing Director of Greyhound UK, explained: "Since launching our high-quality services in September, we have noticed that Portsmouth-London services have been particularly popular with sailors and other naval staff.

"In order to attract more navy personnel on to Greyhound we have introduced a special deal. Around 20 per cent of seats are sold at £1. However the later you book, the more expensive the service will be.

"Of course navy staff will be free to secure our cheaper fares,

but the real benefit of the £7 fixed fare is when they need to travel without much warning."

He added: "In addition naval staff will benefit from our exceptional customer service and outstanding features such as free Wifi, plug sockets, complimentary newspapers and 20 per cent legroom compared to other coaches – £7 for a 70-miles trip in a luxurious coach represents excellent value for money."

The deal also applies to the Greyhound service between Southampton and London.

For more information and to book online go to <http://www.firstgroup.com>



● Logs Joanne Cox and her simian companion outside one of the new accommodation blocks at HMS Raleigh. Picture: Dave Sheffield

Raleigh goes corporate

THERE'S a submariner, a chef, a Jack Dusty and a seaman specialist.

No, we've not gone all stand-up comedian on you, rather we're summing up quite simply the new accommodation at HMS Raleigh.

Two blocks – Corporate Squadron – have opened for junior ratings at the Torpoint establishment, marking a shift in the way trainees live at Raleigh.

For years, sailors undergoing their 'Phase 2' training – turning basic trainees into their specialist roles such as seamen, submariners, stores and personnel administrators, chefs and stewards, sorry logisticians (catering services (preparation/delivery)) – have lived in 24-man messes.

And on top of that, loggies have shared messes only with loggies, submariners with fellow deeps, seamen – yep you get the picture...

Which isn't especially realistic when it comes to life at sea; there aren't too many 'single branch' messes in the submarine/surface fleets.

Hence the decision to put everyone in the same pot at Raleigh. At the same time the two new blocks (keeping up the Operation Corporate theme, they're named Antelope and Ardent after two of the ships lost in the Falklands campaign) also feature much improved accommodation.

The aim is to create a corporate identity (*boom boom – Ed*) without mollycoddling matelots with single en-suite cabins.

"Single cabins give the wrong impression of life in a boat or ship. This accommodation is much better than before, but it's not the Ritz or Hilton," explains Lt Cdr Ant Martin, Raleigh's First Lieutenant.

Now the trainees share eight-man/woman messes, enjoy

common rooms (with obligatory very large TV and games machine), a galley/laundry and smarter communal heads.

More than give the lads and lasses a nicer place to live, the main aim of the new blocks, says Lt Cdr Martin, is "to create a mess ethos, living in a constrained environment, getting into the routine of life on a ship, such as pegging in and out.

"We also found that the routines of different branches varied slightly, such as how the duty watch worked."

Bosses turned down a cleaning contract as part of the construction programme, deciding it was better for the sailors that they cleaned their own mess – as they do on a ship.

"The old system put up barriers between branches," says submariner WO Mark Harris. "This one tears them down."

The first sailors to move into the new blocks concur. They're part-way through the training, so they also experienced the old-style 'separatist' accommodation.

"We're sailors first, members of a branch second," says Logs (Pers) Ben White.

Chef Matthew Ward adds: "It's a big step forward from what it was before. But you also make sure that your space, your kitchen is clean."

"You don't want to leave it dirty – you certainly don't want to let your mess down."

For submariner AB(CIS(SM)) Shaun Gamble moving in with skimmers has been useful for a much wider understanding of the Service.

"You need to realise that you're part of a big Royal Navy family. You see people from other branches, it's interesting to see how they're getting on, and how you can help each other."

Focus on JPA

THE latest news from the JPA Information Forum:

■ **Understanding your Pay Statement (PS)**

There is an explanation of the entries that appear in PSs in the Self Service User Guide which can be found at the JPA Portal under the Library link (click 'Library', 'Self Service user Guide', then 'Pay Statement').

A further glossary of terms (ie an explanation of each acronym used) can be found by clicking the link to the 'JPA Desk Manual User Guide' at the bottom of the PS page and scrolling to the bottom.

■ **Use of I-Supports for pay queries**

As well as contacting the JPAC by telephone, individuals can submit their queries by using the I-Support facility.

All self-service users have this facility and it enables you to check the status of the query at any time and follow it through to resolution.

■ **National Insurance (NI) number as Memorable Data Default**

Until recently, personnel who

had not set their memorable data on the JPA system had it set by default to their NI number.

From November 16 (JPA release 11) this default has been removed and those affected will now be required to set their own memorable data from the list available (favourite sports team, mother's maiden name etc).

This change will not affect those individuals who have already selected their NI as their memorable data.

■ **Qualification Point bars (QP bars)**

You can check to see if you are on a QP bar by checking your Increment Level on your Pay Statement.

If it is followed by the notation (B) then you are subject to a QP bar and cannot progress to the next IL until you achieve a required competence.

If you believe you should not be on a QP bar then you should take this up with the UPO in the first instance. A list of the QP Bar competences for individual RN branches is at JSP 754 Chapter 3 Section 4 Annex A.



News and information for serving personnel

Reunions

JANUARY 2010
HMS Grenville: A short service will be held at the RN memorial on Southsea seaford on January 19 starting at 12.50pm to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the sinking of HMS Grenville – four officers and 73 ratings lost their lives. For more details contact Barry Teale on 023 9282 0067.

MARCH 2010
HMS Diana Association: Hold their next reunion at the Park House Hotel, Blackpool March 5 to 8. Anyone who served on the Diana is welcome to come along and join us. We welcome new members from any commission. For further details please contact John 'Sham' Fisher at johnjackie.fisher@talktalk.net or tel: 01530 242850.

723(CS) Kings Squad RM 1959-60: 50 years on! We passed for duty on March 19 1960. Reunion at Pompey on March 19. Don't miss it! Details from Taff Prichard on 029 2079 0233.

APRIL 2010
HMS Cossack Association: Reunion in April at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea when various anniversaries will be remembered. You can get some information from the website at <http://www.hmsscossack.org> or contact the membership secretary Doug Parkinson at dougirene@talktalk.net or tel: 01420 83521 or contact the secretary on 01252 613052.

MAY 2010
HMS Cambrian: Our next reunion for all who served on board the ship at any time will be at the Holiday Inn, Newport, South Wales from May 14 to 16. Any old shipmates not yet in touch should contact Don Macdonald on 01344 774386.

OCTOBER 2010
HMS Yarmouth: Reunion will be held in Blackpool from October 15 to 18. £130pp (standard room) for three nights, dinner, B&B (Gala dinner on Saturday, no single supplement). Contact John Bryant, 47 Lavender Way, Bradley Stoke, Bristol, BS32 0LR or tel: 0117 947 0122.

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk
Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk
Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veterans-uk.info
RN and RM Service records: 023 9262 8779 or 023 9262 8667
Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk
Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity: 023 9254 8076, www.rnrmc.org.uk
RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk
British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishlegion.org.uk
Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk

Sports lottery

October 17: £5,000 – Mne W M Doleman; £1,500 – AET C Marley; £500 – MEM R L Clarke.

October 24: £5,000 – OM(W)1 J A Barlow; £1,500 – CPO R Newton; £500 – OM(W)2 D J Salter.

October 31: £5,000 – POMEM(L) N S Fields; £1,500 – LMEM1 D A Fishwick; £500 – AB M J D Noonan.

November 7: £5,000 – CPOWEA S A Middleton; £1,500 – LMEM A J Chase; £500 – WO1(WEA) A M Craven.

Swap drafts

LAET(AV) Heggie. Currently on POAET(AV) course with a draft to Culdrose Merlin in March. Willing to swap for any Yeovil draft (preferably Lynx) – even a front-line draft. Contact: chrisheggie@hotmail.com, tel 0794 403 3887.

PO(UW) Pollard-Rice. Drafted to HMS Iron Duke, Portsmouth, in February 2010. Would like to swap for any Plymouth ship, deploying or not. Contact 01752 811344 or email Raleigh-fdi6@nrt.mod.uk.

Assignments

Cdr G A Richardson to 824 NAS TU as CO on November 17.

Lt David A King to HMS Biter as CO on October 30.

Lt Lee Vessey to HMS Puncher as CO on November 2.

Cdr James Morley to HMS Albion as CO on September 7 2010.

Lt Cdr A Chapman to HMS Wildfire as CO on November 18.

Ask Jack

HMS Antrim 1970/73 – 1 GI Mess: Where are my old mess-deck mates of Antrim's first commission? It's coming up to 40 years when we joined Antrim in October 1970, so how about a get-together to see how we have fared in life since and swing the lamp to a few 'bevies'. So where are you? Chris Bryant, Jock W Dawson, Marty Martin-Halls, Mick Frise, Taff Popham, Geoff Stocker, Andy Critchley, G R 'PC' Constable, Nigel Ames, 'Taff' N' Pearce, Joe Conn to name a few. I've got a couple of numbers but need more for a 'good ol' reunion'. So phone me, Chris 'Bungy' Williams on 01392 213585.

HMS Ark Royal 1964-66 Commission Book: Has anyone from that commission still got this book, if so, could I borrow it for copying (professionally)? Postage etc will be refunded. Contact Pete Ridler, 5 Dottery, Bridport, DT6 5PT or tel: 01308 422863 (ex LEM 3D0 Mess).

Morse Key: I am trying to find a morse key as used on HM Ships in the 1950s and 60s. I joined the RN in 1952 until 1964 as a killick sparker. The reason for this request is that as from next year I will be an official volunteer at Duxford Airforce museum representing the Royal Navy and need a morse key for demonstration purposes. Duxford has about 20 odd volunteers from the three Armed Forces and we all do a stint with our information-stands regarding the times we were serving, some have guns but all I need is a morse key, also a message-pad as we used in those days if possible. Contact Bob Knights at wendybob@btinternet.com or write to 3 Howell Road, Drayton, Norwich, NR8 6BU.

RFA Historical Society is compiling a list of all personnel who were on these ships during the Falklands Conflict of 1982, as Radio Operators, Gunners and of course the embarked flights, as well as the RFA and STON crews. Unfortunately the records from this period do not seem to exist. I am asking that any reader who served on an RFA get in touch with me, so that I can record their name, rank, job and the ship they served on. Likewise if you know of someone who served during that period to get in touch. Contact Peter Robinson at Peterrobinson4@aol.com or write to 4 Abbey Mount, Court Avenue, Belvedere, Kent, DA17 5HR.

Oliver 31 Class 1984: Has anyone out there got a video of passing out parade of Oliver 31 Class from September 28 1984 at 2.30pm? Mine was lost in the past recently. If I could borrow one to put on DVD I would be very grateful and pay any cost incurred. Please contact me at: Mrs V L Twining, 8 Southdown Road, Sticker, St Austell, Cornwall PL26 7EW or call 01726 72319.

PLEASE be aware that next month is a short production cycle because of printing and distributing before the Christmas holidays – so get your entries in early

1969 1979 1989 THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...



● Patrol craft HMS Kingfisher which in 1979 bagged the title of highest Naval warship

December 1969

Wren Air Mechanic Stella Nunn of 781 NAS at HMS Daedalus found herself making the record books when she became the first Air Hostess in the Fleet Air Arm.

781 NAS, the only communications squadron at that time, operated Sea Devon and Sea Heron aircraft, as well as a Wessex V helicopter, and Stella was often called upon to look after VIP passengers, such as Admiral Sir Michael Le Fanu, the 1SL, and Vice Admiral Sir Richards Janvrin, the head of the Fleet Air Arm.

She loved flying but it is not known whether her wings were clipped by her impending marriage to an aircraft artificer onboard HMS Eagle at the time.

December 1979

HMS Kingfisher, a 194-ton patrol craft, claimed a European record for being the highest warship in the RN. She managed to reach this exalted position when she passed through Sweden's Gothenburg Canal. Traversing through six locks took 16 hours and raised her to 45.4 metres (184ft) above sea level.

This was then Kingfisher's third and last deployment to the Baltic and by travelling 1,600 miles she also claimed that the ship had sailed further east than any other Bird-class craft up to that point.

December 1989

The great North/South divide was seen to be bridged somewhat when HMS Endurance welcomed aboard AB Dean North from York and Steward Alex South from Peterborough on the same day.

The Navy News headline at the time was "Poles Apart – but not for long", followed by the rather grandiose comment that sailors come from all points of the compass to join the Navy.

That year the ship was celebrating Christmas Day in Grytviken, South Georgia.

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
- Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.
- There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.
- Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.
- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.
- Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

Talking Navy News

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851, or email patn-rea@btinternet.com. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or can be played back through a computer.

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H.M.S. SCARAB

Following extensive enquiries and advertisements I have been unable to locate or contact any Naval Veterans who served on Royal Navy Insect Class Gunboat H.M.S. Scarab. If you served on her, or know anyone who did so, would you please make contact with me. My Father, Frank Sutton Taylor, was a member of the Ships Company 1943 - 1944. I would also like to hear from any veterans who served aboard an Insect Class Gunboat.

Please contact Russell Taylor, PO Box 469, Kumeu, Auckland 0841, New Zealand

Email: RussellJTaylor@xtra.co.nz Phone: 0064 941 18629



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Reporting from the Fleet



NAVY NEWS

NEPTUNE HAS HIS TRIDENT

Deaths

Rear Admiral Rodney Sturdee DSC. Midshipman on Exeter during the Battle of the River Plate. He joined Dartmouth as a special entry cadet in 1937. In the first phase of the battle, Sturdee was a 'spotting officer' in one of Exeter's three main gun turrets, and was lucky to survive this phase. Promoted lieutenant in 1941. Specialised in navigation and was awarded DSC for skill while serving in the 12th minesweeping flotilla in the Mediterranean 1944-45. He was involved in actions up the west coast of Italy, including Husky, the invasion of Sicily, and Avalanche, the Salerno landings. In 1955 he was posted to the Mediterranean as Fleet Navigating officer, then 2IC of RNAS Culdrose, as captain, Queen's Harbour Master in Singapore; staff jobs then last post was Flag Officer Gibraltar before retiring in 1972. President of the Worcestershire branch of the Royal British Legion and Malvern Sea Cadets. October 6. Aged 89.

Lt Cdr Paul Millett DSC. Fleet Air Arm Test Pilot. Volunteered during National Service for a short service career in the Fleet Air Arm. He learnt to fly at RAF Syerston in Nottinghamshire and gained his wings in 1951. His first operational aircraft was the Fairey Firefly, flying in 821 NAS from the carrier Triumph. From 1952 he fought in the Korean War. While coming in to land on the light carrier Glory 1953 his starboard wing dipped and caught a wire and the aircraft crashed over the side; both he and his passenger were picked up by the plane-guard Comus. Still as a sub-lieutenant he clocked up 100 combat sorties and 212 deck landings and was awarded the DSC. Returning to Britain he was appointed to the Central Flying School to become an instructor teaching in the Sea Fury, Firefly and the Vampire jet. In 1958 he was sent to the Empire Test Pilots' School (ETPS) where he flew 44 types of aircraft; he was awarded the OBE for his services to aviation. September 2. Aged 78.

Lt Cdr Edgar Lee DSO VRD RNR. Joined 1940 and after initial training began a flying course in Trinidad qualifying as an Observer. Appointed to 825 NAS he embarked on Ark Royal operating Fairey Swordfish; surviving Ark Royal's sinking he returned to England where he joined the reformed 825 NAS. He was one of only five (out of 18 aircrew-men in five aircraft) that survived the Channel Dash operation, attacking the Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Prinz Eugen; he and his pilot were rescued from their safety dinghy by a MTB and for his actions he was awarded the DSO. Promoted to lieutenant (A) RNRV he instructed in Canada (1943-44) then returned to England to qualify as a Signals Officer demobbing 1947. He rejoined the reserve in 1956, promoted to Lieutenant Commander RNR 1961 and Acting Commander from 1969 serving in most NATO exercises until 1981; retiring aged 60 in 1981. October 29. Aged 88.

Surg Lt Cdr Paul Houghton. Joined the RNRV in 1938. Receiving no naval training he arrived at RN Hospital Haslar at the outbreak of war and found "a mob of doctors" being sent to sea as fast as possible, sometimes even without uniform. He worked at a

naval hospital in Lowestoft before joining Zulu in 1941 (Atlantic convoys) where he experienced treating everything from TB to blast damage, but the most horrendous casualties were survivors of the Ark Royal injured while sliding down her barnacled hull as she sank. He joined Nelson in 1942 and was appalled by the lack of facilities and equipment onboard and promptly wrote to 1SL, Admiral Sir Dudley Pound, asking for modern equipment – earning him a reprimand for not using official channels; however, soon so much equipment arrived that he was able to share it with other ships. Later that year whilst in the Mediterranean he treated Rear-Admiral Philip Vian for an infected, life-threatening cyst and in January 1943 upon examining Vice-Admiral Neville Syfret he realised that he had a burst appendix and peritonitis so he had to operate at once in the battleship's sick bay. He left the service at the end of the war and joined the new NHS. August 5. Aged 97.

Derek Headen. LME. Served in Newfoundland (1955-56). Sheffield, Chichester, Sultan and Centaur. HMS Newfoundland Association. September 4.

Cdr 'Jackie' Clough DSM. Joined as boy 1st class 1934 aged 15 and served in Cyclops, Revenge, London, Glasgow, Javelin, Latona, Queen Elizabeth, Nelson, Leander, Cleopatra, Glasgow, Solebay, Carysfort and Plymouth. Served for 40 years through to the rank of Commander in the Executive Branch and as a Gunner Specialist; shore staff in Malta and Excellent; trials commander Aberporth; deputy Training Director Foreign and Commonwealth retiring 1974. Awarded DSM 1940 and BEM (Military) 1962. Association of RN Officers. October 19. Aged 91.

Dennis William Parker. RP2. Served 1949-57 in Red Pole, Victorious, Implacable, Indomitable, Narvik, Centaur and Albion. Veteran of the British Nuclear Tests 1953 and a member of the association. October 31. Aged 78.

Ron Bowey. Naval photographer. Joined the Royal Marines in 1938, specialised as a physical training instructor, then as a photographer – in which role he recorded the Japanese surrender to Lord Mountbatten in Singapore. He continued with photographic duties until 1949, despite injuries in 1942 and 1944, when he transferred to the film and trials unit of the RN School of Photography. He left the Navy in 1964, working as a cameraman and director for Granada TV. In 2004, he completed a lifetime ambition to return to the Far East and seek the graves of his comrades, Maj John Maxwell RM, C/Sgt Ernie Smith RM, and S/Lt John Thomlinson RNRV, at Kranji cemetery in Singapore. November 2. Aged 90.

Albert Raper. Sig. Algerines Association, served in Pincher. October 16. Aged 83.

Fred Holmes. AB. Algerines Association, served in Cockatrice. October 18. Aged 84.

Gordon 'Bomber' Stuart Brown. AM1(AE). Served 1956-80 at various stations, ships' flights, and RN Hovercraft Trials Unit. Ran in 1964 Fleet Air Arm Field Gun crew and then selected as trainer in 1972-73, and again 1977-78. Fleet Air Arm Field Gun

Association. October 18. Aged 69.

Michael Darlington. LA (SE2). Served from 1952-59. Fleet Air Arm Association, Daedalus branch. October.

Thomas Rogers. AM(E). Served 1939-48 at Kilele (RNAS Tanga), Implacable, Blackcap (RNAS Stretton). Fleet Air Arm Association, Greater Manchester branch. October 15.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Robert Simpson 'Old Grumpy'. 'Black Bob' among other nicknames. CPO. Started out in the Govan shipyards where he became a Shipwright. Served in RNR as ship keeper at Graham in Glasgow then joined the Royal Navy serving in Gibraltar and Faslane; serving for 40 years between the two. HMS Graham Old Hands Association for 25 years and City of Glasgow RNA. October 11. Aged 79.

Andrew Henderson. Royal Navy Commando Frogman. Colchester RNA. Aged 81.

Trevor Shaw. ERA1. Served 1945-60 at Caledonia (ERA apprenticeship) then to Indomitable. 1953 he moved into the submarine service and served in submarines Scorchier (1954), Sidon (1955), Seline (1955) and Solent (1956-59). Survivor of the Sidon disaster and as a result of injuries sustained was invalided out of the service. Lincoln RNA and past treasurer, chairman and at time of death was the president of the Submariners Association. Aged 80.

Arnold Douglas Saunders. CPO. Served 22 years in Jaguar and the cruiser Birmingham. Whilst in charge of millions of pounds worth of spare parts for disposal at Chatham Dockyard he was awarded the BEM for taking the initiative to circulate them to the Fleet ensuring nothing was scrapped. Southend-on-Sea RNA and Isle of Wight Royal British Legion, Shanklin. October 20. Aged 91.

H M 'Sandy' Jarman. MNA. Associate member Scarborough branch and known by many branches especially Liverpool and Hull for his organising of social outings.

J A 'Kipper' Herring. L/S (SR). Served 1975-97; saw service in Kuwait. Scarborough RNA and ex-Battersea branch. Aged 61.

Edna May Skinner. Served WRNS 1941-45. Served as president of Dursley and District RNA. October 11. Aged 89.

Albert Rigby. Tel. 1941-46. Served in MMS 172 (1942-45) Bristol Channel, Mediterranean, west coast of Italy and Corsica, Sardinia. Princes Risborough and District RNA and a member of HMS Royal Arthur Association, Telegraphist Communications branch, Coastal Forces and Algerines Association. He wrote two books, including *Telegraphist Experience on MMS172*. October 24. Aged 88.

F J 'Frank' Brady. Joined in Devonport and served as Tel(s) 1942-46. Served in and loved Malta, but often stayed back in Liverpool. Scarborough RNA since 1979. November 2. Aged 86.

Percival H Kent. AB. Served in Geranium, Exmoor, Primula, and Serene. Beccles RNA. September 13.

Christopher W Russel. AB. Served in Raleigh, Pembroke, Heron, Ark Royal, Monkton, Goldcrest, Hermes, St George,

Arethusa and Eagle. Beccles RNA. September 20.

Derek Bracey. Stoker First Class. Served 1943-47. Flower-class Corvette Association. Norwich RNA. September 24. Aged 83.

Cpl Albert Pitchford RM. Served 1946-58 in various ships and establishments including Assault Squadron Poole, Striker, plus on detachment to Royal New Zealand Navy. Treasurer of Wansbeck RNA for 20 years. October 18.

Reginald 'Reg' Priestley. Leading Hand Seaman. Served 1939-46 in Warwick, Belfast, and Black Prince. Greenwich RNA. October 25. Aged 90.

William 'Bill' Hewitt. Fleet Air Arm. Served WW2 in Malta and Illustrious in the Mediterranean and Pacific. One-time treasurer of Skipton and district RNA. November 2. Aged 86.

Olive Bounds. Ludlow and district RNA, associate member. October 22. Aged 85.

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION
F Matthews. Served on board LST 321. April 29.

J Myatt. Served on board LCG and LCT 637. May 31.

G W Hawkins. Served on board LCT 382. September 4.

G D G Hurman. Served on board LCI(L) 389. October 1.

K A Blackburn. Served on board LCI(L)s 104, 122, 249 and LCT 748. October 11.

G Benbow MID. Served on board LCAs, LCT 401, LSI(L), Empire Outlass. October 13.

R Scarth. Served on board LCA Flotilla 128, LCM Flotilla 131. October 15.

In memory of
CRS ROBERT W STROUT
At 1615 on October 26 2009
Bob left us to join friends
in a better place.

His funeral took place on
November 9 2009 just as
'Up Spirits' would have been
piped (in the old days).

This celebration of his life was
shared by over 100 people, our
families, his shipmates, friends,
neighbours and fellow fishermen.

During 26 years Bob was at sea
on Carysfort, Pellow, Dunkirk,
Victorious and finally the
Yarmouth. He kept his feet dry
at Mercury, Whitehall, Sea Eagle,
Terror (where we met),
Osprey, Drake, SAFLANT USA,
and finally four years with the
RNR in Nottingham.

A colourful career.
Myself, our daughter and
grandchildren would like to take
this opportunity to extend our
heartfelt thanks for all the help
and support we have received at
this difficult time.
God bless you all.

Pat Strout

Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in January's Noticeboard must be received by **December 4**

Chatham makes its mark

TWO influential tourist chiefs with no place to go – where better to spend a few hours than at Chatham Historic Dockyard?

Strictly speaking, Mike Bedingfield of Tourism South East and James Berresford of Visit England were on a fact-finding tour around the country, but they set off on the rest of the trip mightily impressed by what they saw on the banks of the Medway.

Everywhere they looked they would have seen historical buildings shaking off the sands of time by entertaining and educating visitors as they are put to use for a second time through imaginative projects such as the Ropery, where methods dating back to 1618 are still used by modern-day ropemakers.

And just to prove the yard has truly caught the eyes of the world, the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust wound up the current visitor season by adding two more awards to its collection.

The trust was joint winner of the Leisure and Tourism category as well as being rated 'highly commended' in the Service category for its education service, making it eligible for a share of the KOS Media £1m Business Challenge advertising and marketing prize fund.

Judges referred to the Historic Dockyard as "a jewel in the crown of Kent, a fantastic place to visit that will excite, educate and entertain visitors of all ages."

The historical treasures of the Medway towns are not limited to the growth of the Royal Navy – opposite the dockyard, at the western anchor point of the chain which defended the yard in the 17th century, was the site of an excavation which uncovered a very rare full skeleton of a prehistoric and now-extinct straight-tusked elephant.

● Coming your way – HMS Ocean, in miniature, with builder Richard Thurston
Picture: Denise Bradley (Eastern Daily Press)



Codrington blue plaque unveiled

A BLUE plaque has been unveiled at the former home of Admiral Sir Edward Codrington in Brighton.

The British officer commanded the Orion at Trafalgar, and is highly regarded in Greece as his Anglo-Franco-Russian squadron's destruction of the combined Turkish-Egyptian fleet at the Battle of Navarino paved the way for Greek freedom from the Ottoman Empire – though his contemporaries did not quite see him as a man of the world as his heavy-handed tactics ruffled diplomatic feathers more than once.

The plaque, organised by the Montpelier and Clifton Hill Association, was unveiled by the Greek Ambassador, and marks the period between 1828 and 1832 which Codrington spent in the Regency town after the Battle of Navarino.

Faslane plays it safe (and green)

LOOKING for a safe, energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly place to work?

Oh well, there is one place that should figure high on your list – Clyde Naval Base.

That should come as no revelation to those who work on the Clyde, as the base meets its green targets across the range.

But managers at Faslane are not resting on their laurels, and

in recent weeks have staged both a health and safety exhibition and their third annual Energy and Environment week.

The former attracted 19 safety-related companies to the establishment, and as well as dozens of stalls featuring the latest in safety equipment from suppliers such as Bravi UK, Omniflex, MSA Ltd and Quattro, there was also a safety-related play.

AKT Productions are a theatre-based learning resource – a group using the thrill of the greasepaint (and a good story) as an educational tool.

For Faslane it had to be a maritime theme, so there won't have been many dissatisfied punters as the action unfolded on an oil rig, involving the death of a man.

And far from being no questions asked, the audience was invited to become involved, ensuring no one left in a mystified state as to who was responsible and how it could have been prevented.

The energy and environment roadshow started on the Monday

morning with a mobile unit at the north end of the base which moved south and across to RNAD Culport explaining how personnel can save energy and money at home and work.

Interactive displays and free goodies, including a driving simulator which shows how to save on fuel and cut carbon emissions, proved popular.

Richard Ireland, of Clyde's Waste Forum, said: "Energy and Environment Week has been a great success."

"It's down to initiatives like this that environmental issues are at the forefront of people's minds."

"Saving energy makes sense from a financial point of view as well and there really is something everyone can do to help."

"HM Naval Base Clyde is meeting its targets on waste and recycling, energy consumption, gas use and fuel."

"We aim to improve these targets and are confident we are doing a good job of helping the environment."

Do you recall the COPPs?

A LOCAL heritage group in Hampshire is studying the activities of a wartime combined operations unit and hopes *Navy News* readers may be able to help them develop the story.

Discover Hayling is looking at COPP – Combined Operations Pilotage Parties, who were trained in covert operations, reconnoitring and surveying beaches and providing pilot markers for landings on enemy shores in Europe, the Middle and Far East.

This particular unit was formed in January 1943 under Lt Cdr Nigel Wilmott, a navigating officer, and trained on Hayling.

The unit was responsible for taking soil samples and detailed measurements on a clandestine visit to Gold Beach months before the D-Day landings, and when rumours of their success reached American ears the unit went back and repeated their success at the Omaha Beach site before slipping back to their base.

Winston Churchill later asked to meet the unit's chief protagonists, Maj Logan Scott-Bowden and Sgt Bruce Ogden-Smith.

If anyone has any information or memorabilia, including photographs, contact chairman Robin Walton on 023 9271 8441 or on robin@waltondesign.co.uk

Game reserves muck in



● The sky's the limit: a leadership and problem-solving exercise at Garelochhead Training Camp

ROYAL Naval Reserve units from around Scotland and Northern Ireland have taken part in a major recruitment and training weekend at Clyde Naval Base.

As well as allowing current reservists to hone their skills, the weekend was something of a revelation for potential new recruits, who were able to get involved in activities ranging from small arms handling to sea survival drills, fire fighting exercises to waterborne drills with the Royals.

Units participating included Greenock-based HM ships Dalriada (Greenock), Scotia (Edinburgh and East Coast) and HMS Caroline (Northern Ireland).

Reservists and potential recruits greeted Prince Michael of Kent in his role as Honorary Rear Admiral RNR.

The Prince spent a day touring Faslane, taking time to chat to those involved and witnessing first-hand the training being put into action.

Cdr Andrew Cowan, Dalriada's CO, said: "The showcase weekend has been really useful, both in allowing our current reservists to keep their own skills up to scratch, as well as illustrating to new recruits just some of what we get involved in."

Almost 100 reservists, including 35 from the Glasgow area, 36 from the Scotia catchment and 24 from Northern Ireland, took part, and they were joined by 76 potential recruits.



NAVY NEWS

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■ Hidden on this page are more than 20 song and album titles by Fleetwood Mac. Don't ask us why, they just are. There is a £25 Amazon token for the person who identifies the most, and if there is a tie we will draw a winner. Closing date is Friday January 15, and postal and email entries will be accepted – addresses are on page 26. Usual *Navy News* competition rules apply, and the competition is not open to *Navy News* employees and their families.

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Around the units

ST ALBANS unit made a clean sweep of the Hertfordshire five-a-side football tournament.

Playing at the Metropolitan Police HQ in Hendon, the three teams went home with three trophies – junior cadets, senior female cadets and senior boys.

Ten-year-old Max August also won the Player of the Tournament Award for his cat-like prowess in goal for the junior team.

All three teams now go on to represent Hertfordshire at the Eastern Area competition in St Ives this month.

PLYMOUTH Drake unit has been short-listed for a Lottery award competition with a chance to win funding of £50,000.

The cadets are one of six groups within the West Country preparing to compete for the funding through the ITV's *Peoples Millions* programme.

Plymouth Drake Sea Cadets were set to go head-to-head with Portland's Quarry Trust in a live telephone vote on the early evening regional news show as *Navy News* went to press.

TWELVE Sea Cadet instructors from all over the UK were recognised for their community-based learning achievements when Admiral the Lord West of Spithead presented them with awards at a CVQO (Cadet Vocational Qualification Organisation) graduation ceremony at Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth, in front of colleagues, families and friends.

The deserving dozen were presented with a City and Guilds Senior Award in Youth Management and Training, comparable to foundation, honours and masters degrees and achieved through their work as a Cadet Force Adult Volunteers.

www.cvqo.org

SEA Scouts from across the globe gathered in the UK to celebrate the World Centenary of Sea Scouting.

A wreath-laying and church service took place at St Andrew's earlier in the year, with local scouts joined by colleagues from New Zealand, the United States and Ireland.

Roy Masini, who specialises in the recording of Sea Scout history, gave a talk on how the idea of scouts on water was developed by Robert Baden-Powell and his close associates.

Murder squad host Stevenage visitors

STEVENAGE cadets were invited by murder detectives to attend a police station.

No sinister reasons, though – the lads and lasses of TS Andromeda were at the Metropolitan Police Training School's Peel Centre, Hendon, as guests of the Homicide Command.

Their day included a tour of the centre which took in the remembrance garden and book for fallen officers.

The tour features original exhibits from the Great Train Robbery, including a champagne bottle with a fingerprint of Ronnie Biggs which led to his identification.

The Murder Squad went on to explain how they go about their work, and DS Steve Baldwin and DC Hazel George talked to their guests about knife crime.

Next stop was the skid pan, where staff from the driving school demonstrated their dizzying skills.

Back on dry land, the visiting group was supplied with refreshments, and then it was on with the packed programme.

The cadets changed into their No 1 uniforms and were invited to attend the probationer

passing-out parade which was staged under the watchful eye of Metropolitan Police drill officer Peter Clements.

At the end of proceedings a debrief session was chaired by DCI Tony Nash in order to gauge the views of cadets and staff.

DCI Nash said: "It was a unique opportunity for the cadets to be exposed to the Metropolitan Police Service and for police officers to talk to young people about their perception of current crime issues such as knife-enabled crime and serious youth violence and associated police actions."

"It is clear that both groups benefited from the experience."

The Commanding Officer of TS Andromeda, PO (SCC) Tracy Attridge, said: "I would like to thank all the officers of the Murder Squad for allowing my staff and cadets to experience a little insight into the challenging work undertaken by the unit and to all the other officers who contributed to a memorable day for my cadets."

● Cadets and staff from Stevenage unit gather around the statue of Sir Robert Peel, founding father of the modern police force, outside Peel House at the Metropolitan Police Training School at Hendon



● PO James Thompson (left) is roped in with Apprentice star Margaret Mountford and MSSC Legacy Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Roger Busby RNR

Officer tidies up campaign logo knot

ROPED in to help launch a national legacy campaign, PO James Thompson spotted a knotty problem – the logo for Forget-Me-Knot Week was just not pusser...

Quick as a flash, the nimble-fingered Hornchurch PO solved the image issue with a swift "right-over-left-and-under... left-over-right-and-under" to produce a perfect reef knot.

Twenty charities took part in the London launch of the 'Remember a Charity in your Will' campaign, in which the Marine Society and Sea Cadets highlight the legacy of the wartime RNVR with a "wavy lace" appeal.

Lassoed with Alan (now Lord) Sugar's Apprentice guru, Margaret Mountford, for the photo-call at the start of the week-long publicity drive, James joked: "Good job I spotted that ropey knot in time, otherwise I would have been ribbed by my shipmates."

Roebuck's day

LOCAL VIPS, including the Mayor and Mayoress of Taunton Deane, local MP Jeremy Browne and the Deputy National Hydrographer, Capt Vaughan Nail, attended Taunton unit's annual RN parade.

TS Roebuck, based at the UK Hydrographic Office, comprises 24 senior and 11 junior cadets, led by CPO (SCC) Geoff Kerswell and his team of adult instructors.

Big thanks to Gary

AFTER three years with the CCF as Area Instructor for the London NW Region, CPOPT Gary Aldridge is returning to manage the Gym at HMS Sultan.

Two of the courses he was most closely involved with in the CCF were the leadership weekend and week-long courses based in HMS Raleigh and the sports courses.

All the cadets and staff with whom CPO Aldridge has been associated wish him well in his new job and thank him for his generous comments, unflagging energy and enthusiasm which has helped make his courses so enjoyable and memorable.

Jess is Top Fin Surprise for five



● LC Jess Bereznykyj

THE Sea Cadet Corps National Diving Acquaintance Course is regarded by many as the hardest that a Sea Cadet can undertake.

The course is open to adults and cadets who are already qualified divers, and teaches subjects such as rope signals, different types of searches, night diving and correct use of thunderflashes.

It is not only physical but mentally demanding as well.

So to pass the course is an achievement – allowing the diver to wear the elite diving badge – but to be 'Top Fin' as well is the icing on the cake.

So well done LC Jess Bereznykyj, of Nottingham unit, who beat seven other students (four of them adults) to the award.

Jess is also the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for 2009-10.

FIVE staff were in for a surprise when they attended the Essex District annual seamanship competition.

PO (SCC) Greg Salter (Chelmsford), CPO (SCC) Sharon Smith (Colchester), CPO (SCC) Les Rudd (Hornchurch), CPO (SCC) Ben Mearing (Chelmsford) and Lt (SCC) William Rock RNR (Walton) were enticed to the event on various pretexts, at which point they were presented their Cadet Forces Medals by Deputy District Officer Lt Cdr (SCC) Michael Chittock RNR.



Units mark Trafalgar victory across the country

WHILE the main event took place in London (see p44) units and districts around the country also marked the victory at Trafalgar with style.

And though we cannot cover every parade and event, we can at least give an idea of the time and effort put in by all those cadets and staff who took part to ensure that smart dark blue uniforms are seen in towns and cities around the UK.

Some 150 West Yorkshire cadets and 50 staff

under the direction of Lt Cdr (SCC) Jim Spink RNR, representing nine units, paraded at Castleford this year (see above) with the Mayor and Mayoress of Castleford as VIPs.

Severn District Trafalgar Day parade was hosted by Ross and Monmouth unit in Ross-on-Wye, where the Inspecting Officer was the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire, Air Cdre Smart.

In the West Midlands, 65 bluejackets and 15

Marine cadets of Mercia District units, along with members of HMS Forward (Birmingham RNR) and Sea Scouts, paraded around Nelson's Statue before marching through Birmingham city centre to a reception hosted by the Lord Mayor (above, centre).

Commemorative medals were presented to each cadet to acknowledge the 200th anniversary of the unveiling of the statue, the first in the country paid for by public subscription.

Berkshire District units headed for Henley-on-Thames (see above), where the flag lieutenant was Lt Simon Thompson RN, a former Marlow cadet.

More than 100 cadets from Basingstoke, Henley, Maidenhead, Newbury, Reading and Slough and Windsor took part.

Somerset and Dorset's parade was held in Weymouth, where the lead officer was Lt Cdr (SCC) Andy Jennings, of Bridgwater unit.

Acquaint way to learn...

THE third Armed Forces Careers Acquaint course at Inskip saw seven Sea Cadets and one air cadet try out a wide range of Services-related activities.

Under the leadership of Lt (SCC) Tony Smith RNR, the eight students flew, sailed, shot, navigated and even managed a bit of down-time.

Flt Lt Alan Howard RAFVR(T) provided air navigation instruction, after which the youngsters went airborne in a Squirrel helicopter, while the Fleetwood Nautical Campus of Blackpool and the Fylde College taught sea survival skills.

Inskip's Commandant, Cdr (SCC) Barry Glanville RNR, and CPO (SCC) Mike Farley taught the principles of maritime navigation in preparation for a trip down the Solent – using the college's ship bridge simulators, rather than travelling south.

RIB training was made possible by the loan of boats by Blackpool unit, shooting was staged on the indoor range of RAF Woodvale and the cadets also went aloft in a Tutor aircraft.

The following Sea Cadets attended: POC L. Fitzpatrick (Leicester), POC B. Marriette and LC D. Heffy (Huyton with Roby), ACs N. Cook and A. Horrocks (Lancaster and Heysham), AC L. Fell (Runcorn), POC K. Isherwood (Warrington) and Cpl C. Bruffell (2359 (Walton) Sqn ATC).

Vital support came from WO2 P. Bolton, supported by S/Lt (SCC) J. Wrigley RNR, S/Lt (SCC) M. Mitchison RNR and PO A. Spence SCC.

Arbroath welcome Canadians

ARBROATH cadets played host to Canadian colleagues who were staying at HMS Caledonia.

The Canadians travelled north from Rosyth after lunch, and were treated to a visit to the local lifeboat station, where some of them got the chance to try on lifeboat protective clothing.

They also called in at the Signal Tower Museum – which was opened specially for the visitors – and the day was rounded off with a trip on the passenger launch Girl Katherine 11, which took them along the cliffs and shoreline around the port.

Before they headed back to the Forth, the Canadian cadets were given stovies and bannocks for their tea.

The Canadians last visited the North Sea port five years ago, so the youngsters of TS Arbroath were delighted to welcome them back – and hope it is not too long till they make their way back again.

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Sea Scout group celebrate centenary



● Members of the 3rd Margate Holy Trinity Scout Group – forerunners of the current Holy Trinity (Margate) Sea Scouts – on board HMS Ramilles in 1919

A SEA Scout group which can trace its ancestry back to 1909 is seeking former members as part of its centenary celebrations.

The idea of forming a Scout group occurred to the vicar of Holy Trinity Church in the town in the autumn of 1909, sowing the seeds of the 3rd Margate Scout Group.

These Scouts had important roles to fulfil in both world wars, as coastguards, observers and messengers – and one former member, an RAF pilot named Webb Davies, died on active service in 1941.

Their church HQ was bombed in June 1943, and it was to be 16 years before a new church was consecrated.

The group changed allegiance from land to sea in the 1960s, and were accepted into the Royal Navy Recognition Scheme in the late 1980s as RN-50.

Group Leader Terry Pankhurst said they would like to hear from anybody who has been a member of the 3rd Margate Holy Trinity Scout Group and Holy Trinity (Margate) Sea Scouts.

Contact the group on 01843 230348 (evenings only) or email Accounts.trinitymargate@tesco.net or skip@rn50.org.uk – and the group still has room for boys and girls aged between six and 14, and adult volunteers.



● Lt Cdr (SCC) Jim Budgen RNR

Hospital visitors present certificate

A SPECIAL presentation to a long-serving member of staff at Ruislip unit had to be amended at short notice when the recipient was confined to hospital while recovering from an operation.

An award was to be made to Lt Cdr (SCC) Jim Budgen RNR (79), who has just completed 50 years service in the Corps.

So prior to the event at the cadets' HQ, the London Area Officer, Cdr Paul Haines, the CO of Ruislip unit, James Parkinson, and unit chairman Aidan Harris visited Jim at Hillingdon Hospital.

There they presented Jim with a certificate of appreciation, and later, back at HQ, they read out the citation for Jim's award.

That outlined a career spanning half a century, starting in the autumn of 1959 when Jim joined the instructing staff of TS Pelican, having already spent 12 years in the Royal Navy.

He became a lieutenant in 1971, and in 1984 he was appointed CO of Ruislip unit.

During those years Jim was at the forefront of unit routines, but is especially remembered for the activities centred around the boat house on the Grand Union Canal in Uxbridge, for unit fundraising, for expeditions and for the number of pennants and trophies won by the unit and its cadets.

Since standing down as CO, Jim has continued his active involvement with the unit.

He still provides instructional expertise (and has occasionally stood in for the CO at parade evenings and other events), he has devoted many years to ship-keeping – the maintenance and upkeep of the unit's HQ – and he also tirelessly promotes TS Pelican in the local community, not least through his long involvement with the local RNA and the HMS Ganges Association.

Solemn duty and an illustrious affiliation

CADETS and unit staff from the Malta GC unit gathered at the Cenotaph in Floriana to take part in their nation's remembrance ceremonies.

Reflecting ceremonies held around the world in honour of the fallen, a parade was led by the band of the Armed Forces of Malta, followed by two 50-strong detachments from the Army and the Police.

Marching behind the British Legion contingent were representatives of the Royal Naval Association and Royal Marines Associations, followed by the Sea Cadets and the Girl Guides.

This year the Malta unit was well represented by a nine-strong squad of Sea Cadets led by Mid

(SCC) Keith Marshall RNR and a detachment of 12 Marine Cadets under the command of unit Oic, Lt (SCC) Donald Montebello RMR.

Other Cadets and members of staff were also on duty as wreath bearers to attending VIPs and dignitaries.

Amongst those laying wreaths at the foot of the memorial were the President of the Republic of Malta, Dr George Abela, the Prime Minister, Dr Lawrence Gonzi, the Presidents of the British Legion and the Poppy Appeal Fund and a large number of ambassadors and High Commissioners, including British High Commissioner Louise Stanton – who is also patron of the unit.

Four members of the unit have been on duty a little further afield than Floriana.



● Sea and Marine Cadets of the Malta GC unit who took part in remembrance ceremonies on the island

The quartet were among 500 affiliates who were taken to sea for a day on board aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious, with which the Malta GC unit enjoys strong ties.

In sunshine more reminiscent of

the Mediterranean than Portsmouth in November, the visitors enjoyed the cruise into the Solent and the Channel, and as a token of their gratitude presented CO Capt Ben Key with a hand-made ship's badge inscribed *Malta Convoys* – the most special of Lusty's Battle Honours, in their eyes.

In return Capt Key presented the unit with a White Ensign which unit chairman James Davis said will take pride of place at the unit's Taranto Night dinners.

Corps role models win awards

TWO outstanding cadets have been rewarded for demonstrating the qualities to which cadets are encouraged to aspire.

L/Cpl Bradley Price joined as Marine Cadet in 2005 and has been active in all areas of the Corps, qualifying in many waterborne activities and achieving a clutch of qualifications.

He has been an excellent role model in his unit, Hastings, helping to train new recruits when staffing levels were low and encouraging recruitment to ensure the survival of the detachment.

He is currently working hard sitting exams for Cadet Corporal and studying for GCSEs, to enable him to join the Royal Marines.

Last year he proved an excellent ambassador for UK cadets when chosen for the Sussex District Australia Exchange – while Down Under he was asked by the Nelson Society to publicly recite the Royal Marine Prayer at a Trafalgar service in front of 300 people in Perth Cathedral.

He and his family have recently moved 25 miles away from his unit, but he remains dedicated and enthusiastic, attending regularly twice a week and at weekends despite a two-hour journey.

LC Wesley Jenkins is great friends with AC Harry Grace, who at 13 is the younger by a year.

In September 2008, after school,



● From left: Lt (SCC) Mark Fifield RNR, L/Cpl Bradley Price, Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex Peter Field, Lord Lieutenant of West Sussex Susan Pyper, Alex Young, Lt (SCC) Alan Simister and LC Wesley Jenkins

while going on a microscoter to the local shops Harry lost his balance and fell on to railings, impaling his neck and face on a 5in spike.

In a state of shock, he managed to pull his neck from the spike, but had obviously sustained a serious injury.

Wesley, of Hove unit, remained calm, flagging down a passing car and explaining what had happened; the occupants of the car were ex-Servicemen and helped Wesley keep Harry calm

while the emergency services and Harry's mother were called.

The hospital later said had it not been for Wesley's actions, Harry could have died; the youngster had 56 stitches in the wound.

Both youngsters were worthy recipients of their respective Lord Lieutenant's awards.

Also at the ceremony to pick up awards recognising their service to the Corps were Lt (SCC) Mark Fifield RNR (Hove unit) and Lt (SCC) Alan Simister RNR of Eastbourne.

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Hundreds gather for big parade

MORE than 400 cadets from across the UK paraded in Trafalgar Square to honour Nelson's victory at Trafalgar.

And one of the Royal Navy's top officers, Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar, was there to see the whole event.

The traditional bluejacket parade from The Mall to Trafalgar Square, with an 80-strong Sea Cadet marching band, is one of the highlights of the Sea Cadet

calendar, allowing youngsters aged from 12 to 18 to take part in a display which attracts large crowds along the route and in Trafalgar Square itself.

The parade went smoothly – and that is a testament to the dedication of the youngsters and their staff, as they only met up *en masse* three days before at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth to practise the whole routine for the first time.

The Corps has marked the anniversary

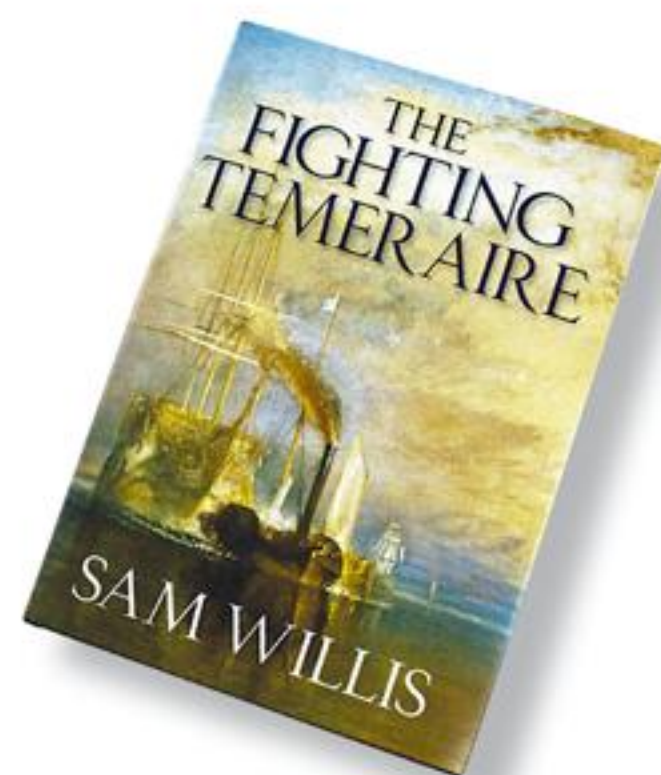
of the Battle of Trafalgar for 100 years now, and is now eagerly grasped as an opportunity to showcase the skills, talent and dedication of the Sea Cadets in front of Royal Navy and civic dignitaries as well as spectators and tourists.

Next year the Sea Cadets will be joined by the youngsters of the Army Cadet Force and Air Training Corps as they jointly celebrate 150 years of uniformed youth groups with Cadet 150.

● Clockwise from top left: AC Jordan Shaw and POC Chris Gay (Musselburgh unit), POC Fiona Young (Blackpool unit) and AC Karl Preston (Hartlepool unit) give their seal of approval to proceedings; Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar talks to members of the Guard; cadets line up with their wreaths; drummers with the band; Admiral Soar and Captain of Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor (left) inspect the cadets; staff keep a sharp eye on proceedings; (below) cadets and band in Trafalgar Square

Pictures: PO(Phot) Amanda Reynolds





A 'raire breed

FIVE years ago, Britons voted on their favourite painting. They plumped (pretty conclusively) for Turner's iconic, romantic view of the end of the days of sail.

And as a piece of art, *The Fighting Temeraire* ('The Fighting Temeraire' tugged to her Last Berth to be broken up, 1838' to give it the full title) has rather overshadowed the subject herself. Sam Willis intends to correct that with a biography of the eponymous warship.

This is the first book in a trilogy focusing on the days of sail – a biography of Admiral Benbow and an account of the 'Glorious First of June' will follow.

The Fighting Temeraire (Quercus, £25 ISBN 978-1-84724-998-2) is probably the obvious place to begin the triptych: the name resonates, not least because of that painting.

Sam Willis really does produce beautiful books.

His enormous pictorial histories of the days of sail and steam are among the finest – and largest – volumes ever to land (with a thunderous thud) on the *Navy News* doormat.

The Fighting Temeraire follows in the same vein, although the emphasis here is on words rather than imagery.

There have been seven ships to bear the name, but the author focuses on just the first two.

The first was a captured French 74-gun, *Temeraire* (we quickly dispensed with those tricky accents...), the second entered immortality at Trafalgar, famously coming to the aid of *Victory*.

The 'fighting' sobriquet came courtesy of Turner. *Temeraire* was lavished with praise and recognition after the victory; she was held aloft as the 'Pride of England and Terror of France'. Sailors, however, preferred to call her the 'saucy Temeraire' – for reasons, sadly, lost in the mists of time.

She was also the mutinous *Temeraire*: in late 1801 sailors refused to sail anywhere other than for home after peace was declared with France. A dozen men were hanged for their impudence. The stain was only erased at Trafalgar.

The ship served for a decade after that defining battle, in the Baltic and off the Iberian peninsula, before ending her days first as a floating prison, then as a 'receiving ship' for new sailors without drafts.

Temeraire's retirement was long, but it did not diminish her fame. Her final journey to the breaker's yard was reported by a myriad of newspapers and contemporary journals, her passing provoked lament and drew huge crowds to Rotherhithe, among them Joseph Turner.

It is as well he did venture down to the Thames to capture the passing of one era and the dawn of another, for little else of the fighting *Temeraire* survives: most of her timbers were sold to builders, furniture makers and shipyards. Perhaps, the author muses, they hold up the roof of a home in Rotherhithe or were turned into that ornament in a Greenwich antique shop.

He concludes: "The *Temeraire* may now be scattered but she lives on in our hearts and minds today as surely and as steadfastly as she once lived on the seas that surround us."

The lives of udders

The Grove Review

AN IMPORTANT dimension of the German submarine offensive against Allied shipping in World War 2 was the development of the ability to replenish boats so as to extend their time on station.

Given the diplomatic difficulties created by the use of Spanish ports and the effectiveness of British countermeasures against conventional tankers at sea the answer seemed to be the use of submarines as replenishment platforms, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

A new Type XIV tanker submarine was brought into service at the end of 1941 just as the U-Boat war entered the Western Hemisphere with Hitler's declaration of war on the USA opening up the mass of unprotected shipping in US waters.

Other boats were also used as 'Milch Cows' (Milk Cows), as the Germans called them, notably the large Type XB minelayers whose size precluded their use in the shallow waters where their mines were most effective.

An established expert on these supply submarines is Dr John F White, whose professional activities are those of a computer programmer in artificial intelligence, computer translation and finance, but who has had a long-standing interest (since the age of ten) in the German Navy and its activities.

Certainly his general command of the sources is as good as that of a professional naval historian and he has used this to expand and revise his previous *U-Boat Tankers 1941-45* into the present work, **The Milch Cows: The U-Boat Tankers 1941-45** (Pen & Sword, £19.99 ISBN 978-1-84884-008-9).

One connection between the author's 'day job' and his subject is the use of mechanised computation in the code breaking that made the activities of the Milch Cows so dangerous.

Clearly, refuelling operations were almost impossible without some radio indiscretion, although the amazing German over-confidence in the security of their ciphers made the situation much worse.

This over-confidence was matched by the American tendency to throw caution about security to the winds and exploit every code-breaking breakthrough to hunt down submarines, regardless of the possibility of the Germans smelling a rat.

The result was carnage among the 'Milch Cows' and the submarines suckling from them. All ten Type XIVs were sunk and eight of the ten Type XBs.

In a sense the Milch Cows were rather peripheral to the main war against the U-boat on the main North Atlantic convoy routes which, as the author shows, had been won by the end of 1943.

Nevertheless, the U-tankers were very significant force multipliers. Between them the 18 Type XIVs and IXDs made about 50 completed cruises and by the author's calculation were responsible for the U-boats' sinking an extra 1,400,000 tons of shipping – about ten per cent of the total losses they inflicted over the whole war.

They also allowed U-boats to operate much further afield than they otherwise could have done, notably off Cape Town and into the Indian Ocean. They could not, however, defeat a mature convoy system.

Perhaps the main enemy of the Milch Cow was the American escort carrier group freely using special intelligence to make a 'hunter-killer' strategy work.

This was a prelude to the SOSUS-based anti-submarine warfare of the Cold War era using underwater listening posts.



● A 'dead man's cradle' is used to transfer supplies from Milch Cow U459

The American dimension is indeed a crucial part of the Milch Cow story and the author might have developed a little more his discussion of the interesting US Navy 'Tenth Fleet', the specialist ASW organisation set up in May 1943 that had no ships but which directed the American anti-U-boat war through 'suggestions' and 'recommendations'.

As the author says this was under the overall command of the Chief of Naval Operations, the irascible Admiral King, but its effective operational commander was its Chief of Staff, Admiral Frances Low, who, sadly, does not get a mention.

The best book on this subject, Farago's interesting and informative study *Tenth Fleet*, is also strangely not mentioned in the bibliography.

This is probably the most important gap in the book, given the impact of Tenth Fleet's aggressive submarine killing policy on the fate of the Milch Cows.

Given the importance of code breaking to the story there are one or two little glitches. In his introduction the author refers to codes being broken by 'the world's first electronic computers'. Whether the electro-mechanical 'bombs' used against Enigma

qualify for this title is debatable, as the author later makes clear.

The real electronic computer at Bletchley Park, 'Colossus', was used against different ciphers. The role of the capture of U110 and its relationship with the other cryptographical captures about the same time also needed more discussion, especially as the author is clearly aware of the work of the official historian, Harry Hinsley, who knew more about this rather vexed subject than anyone else, having played a key role in the process himself.

For those put off by Official Histories the more recent book by Hugh Sebag-Montefiore, *Enigma: the Battle for the Code* is easily available and accessible and is highly recommended as a balanced and well-informed account.

Clearly the author has spent a massive amount of time on his research over the years. A sign of this is his reference to that former mine of U-boat information Bob Coppuck, as if he were still at the Naval Historical Branch.

Bob was always most generous with his time to researchers and created that amazing evolving data base on U-boats and their fate that is one of the Branch's greatest achievements (among many others) but he has not been there

for some time.

Dr White's command of the German sources is notable, including the archives at the U-boat Museum in Cuxhaven and the U-boat crews' magazine *Schaltung Küste* that is a good source for survivors' stories.

As usual with the publisher, there are no footnotes or endnotes which is rather a pity given the overall quality of the book which is clearly an authoritative and comprehensive study.

Readers will be fascinated not just by the mainstream replenishment work but by also by the book's accounts of German submarine operations far afield, including the interface with the Japanese, liaison with whom was a significant U-boat activity. Penang in Malaya and Tjikopo in the Dutch East Indies were important, if unlikely, U-boat bases.

This is a most worthwhile book and a most worthy addition to the literature on the U-boat war.

A pig-headed clash

THROUGH the ages Britain has gone to war for reasons just (liberation of the Falklands, curbing Nazi aggression), reasons not entirely just (the 'scrap of paper' to save Belgium in 1914 although the real motive was to limit German expansion) and reasons downright shabby (the Zulu war anyone?).

Perhaps the most ludicrous reason for two nations squaring up, however, was the death, nay murder, of a pig.

Hence the name of this silly little *contretemps*, **The Pig War** whose (very complicated) course is charted by former RN officer turned historian, E C Coleman (*History Press*, £14.99 ISBN 978-0-7524-5227-2).

The pig, of course, wasn't the issue, but it was the *casus belli*.

For a number of years in the mid-19th Century, Britain and the United States had been squabbling over ownership of an island chain which dominated the waters between Vancouver Island and the North American mainland.

It was their commanding strategic position which led both nations to want the San Juan Islands. Both claimed them. A showdown was inevitable.

The first colonial settlers of San Juan came courtesy of the Hudson's Bay Company – 1,300 sheep, a few pigs and a handful of farmers.

The Americans weren't chuffed. They demanded recompense. The British said 'no', so the Americans set out to steal the sheep.

Now sheep without a sheepdog

aren't very co-operative. Having 'liberated' the animals from their pen, the Americans struggled to herd the creatures into their cutters for rowing back to the US mainland.

The British weren't chuffed. They demanded nearly £3,000 – £175,000 in today's money – in compensation (for the theft of 34 sheep, plus the cost of hiring 18 men for eight days to round up the 409 other animals let loose by the Americans).

The Americans didn't pay up. They did, however, begin settling San Juan to stake a more permanent claim to the island.

Among the settlers was one Lyman Cutler, a farmer of staggering ineptitude. Cutler planted a crop of potatoes and became rather annoyed that one of the island's (British) pigs kept helping himself to the veg.

Building a fence might have been a good idea but, no, Cutler shot the pig. Again the British demanded compensation (\$100) and again the Americans said no.

It's here that the dispute slips out of the hands of settlers and incompetent farmers and enters the realm of diplomats and generals.

The American settlers felt threatened. The Army was sent in to 'protect' them: a small garrison was established under one George E Pickett (he would later

lead his division to destruction in the eponymous charge at Gettysburg).

The Empire responded by sending a few warships, their guns trained at Pickett's flimsy camp.

And across the water in Victoria, English, Canadian and American sightseers bought tickets to watch the stand-off.

The Americans sent in more troops and guns. Britain put a Royal Marines detachment ashore. They established a fort at the opposite end of San Juan.

And so began a 'cold war' where the only people fighting were the diplomats and generals.

The two opposing sides on the island regularly entertained each other (the Brits were cordially invited to take part in July 4 celebrations), there were sporting contests (the 100-yard blindfold dash), there were picnics attended not just by the troops but by ladies who'd come across from Victoria.

The 'pig war' petered out in amity between the two sides on the island, while the respective governments sought a permanent solution.

It took them 13 years to resolve the dispute; a commission eventually ruled in the Americans' favour.

In October 1872, the British garrison – "76 men of the Royal Marine Light Infantry, fine,

healthy, sturdy-looking fellows" – withdrew, taking the flagpole with them. "You know," one junior officer told the Americans "we could never have any other flag float from a staff that had borne the cross of St George."

This is a most unusual tale, told in great detail by the author who has made excellent use of the (vast) source material.

Are there resonances today? Well, nations still fight over disputed territories (the Falklands being a prime example in Britain's recent history).

But above all, the pig war is a reminder that war's too serious a business to be left to the bigwigs, while the men on the ground viewed things far more sensibly – and amicably.



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Swimmers' masters class

RN SWIMMERS exceeded all expectations, bringing home a staggering haul of 48 medals from the World Masters Games in Sydney.

The 28-strong team battled against competitors from 92 nations, bringing home 16 gold, 19 silver and 13 bronze medals, rounding off a phenomenal year of success in which they also scooped four Inter-Service against the RAF and Army.

The World Masters Games is an international competition similar to the Olympics, but instead is open to athletes over the age of 25 who compete at a world class level in their sport. This year more than 28,000 people competed in 28 different categories ranging from swimming to cycling to running.

LPT Stuart Mantle came away with one of the largest haul of medals – three gold and three silver from the 200m freestyle, two relay events and three backstroke categories.

"I'm over the moon," he said. "I've been swimming all my life – I started as a kid and then when I joined the Navy

at 18 I just continued with it. I really enjoy it and work hard at my training so to win so many medals at once is a great feeling. Everyone did well out there though, it was a team effort."

Assistant sports officer for RN swimming Gary Thomas added: "This has been an exceptional year for us. Before we went out to Sydney we set 30 medals as the target so we were well in excess of that – it is fantastic and a great boost for the team."

"In our five-year plan we target this as one of our major events and, as far as possible and deployment-depending, we ramp up our efforts to gain the maximum achievement possible. In fact, if the three-kilometre open water race hadn't been cancelled I believe we would have come back with 50 medals."

● **Showing off their medals haul (l-r) are Stuart Mantle, Gary Thomas, James Warwick, Steve Berry, Sarah Buchan and Andy Grundy**

Picture: LA(Phot) Pete Smith, FRPU East



Dominating the dinghies

FOR the first time since 2005, the RN dinghy team-boat racing squad has dominated the season.

Unlike fleet racing, where the individual's performance matters, team-boat racing involves the application of more tactics and is sailed over shorter courses; the races often lasting only 15-20 minutes.

Points are awarded for the place each boat finishes and the various combinations of points allocated mean that even if one boat in the team finishes first, the team could still lose if the other boats finish down the field.

This method of scoring means that whoever is in the lead may often have to come back down the fleet to help those further back achieve a better finish.

Knowledge of the sailing rules of road and good boat handling skills are key and races can often see some dinghies almost coming to a stop as they try to outmanoeuvre the other team.

The Inter-Services team-boat racing championships were held in Portsmouth Harbour in bright sunshine and light winds. Sailing in Laser 2000s, two RN teams comprising 12 of the best Royal Navy sailors.

Over two days, the Navy A team dominated – they were undefeated, despite a shaky second day.

Their success was aided by grinding out wins from poor starts thanks to good communication, boat speed and crewing, which had helped win them the Victory trophy earlier in the year.

The RN B team deservedly took home the B team cup after finishing 3rd in the league, just behind the Army A and ahead of the RAF A, showing the RN's clear dominance of the event.

The event concluded what has been a very successful 2009 for the dinghy sailing team but as with most sports in the RN, there is still a need to increase numbers in the squad.

Next year will see a concerted campaign to get more people involved in the sport and afloat in the Navy's extensive variety of boats, located in sailing centres around the country.

The first key event is the Holt Cup, an inter-command competition held at BRNC Dartmouth, where novices and experts alike are pitted against each other in a weekend of team-boat racing.

Details at www.rnsa.net/Dinghies/News.aspx or contact one of your local representatives.

Advance warning

ARTICLES for our January 2010 issue must be received by December 7 to meet our pre-Christmas deadline.

Ace DC performance

IN ONE of the closest contests for many years the RN/RM men's marathon team defeated the US Marine Corps in the Washington marathon – regaining the Challenge Cup after two years in US hands.

The cup is an 1897 Victorian silver trophy which was brought from the UK in 1978 for the first challenge.

Three decades later, the battle between the US Marines and the RN is intense as ever.

The score is now RN 23-USMC 9 – quite an extraordinary feat considering the relative numbers involved and the USMC's fitness reputation.

In 2001, a ladies challenge was introduced with a separate trophy – won this year by the USMC – who now lead by 6-3.

Both teams meet up three days before the race for a reception featuring a lot of banter and race predictions.

This year the opposing camps were in the same hotel which added to the intense but friendly rivalry.

Race day conditions were perfect and at 8am 25,000 runners set off from the Iwo Jima Memorial in Arlington on a course that passed the Pentagon, White House, Capitol, and numerous monuments.

Team tactics had been discussed and as planned Cpl Mark Croasdale and Cpl Brian Cole, veterans of more than a dozen Washington races between them, sat in with a group of US Marines at a steady six-minute mile pace.

Two more Americans were well ahead at this stage. Sgt Mark Goodridge and PO Pete Waumsley were sensibly running behind the main group, while Cpl Monty Montague in his third marathon was the Royal



● **The RN/RM runners pose with the Challenge Cup after their triumph over the US Marine Corps in the Washington Marathon**

Navy's final runner and heading for a personal best.

The team were updated on race positions at various points around the course by Cdr Al Rich who competed in the first 1978 challenge and has run 17 times since.

With the US Marines comfortably ahead by six minutes at 16 and 20 miles (the three best times to count), the order was given at 20 miles to change gear.

Croasdale responded and charged through the field with some gutsy running, finishing strongly in 2h 39m and only 30 seconds behind the leading US marine.

Cole was also drawing closer to the leading US Marines,

overhauling all but their lead runner to finish in 2h 40m.

The remaining RN runners all finished strongly – Sgt Mark Goodridge in 2h 41m, PO Waumsley in 2h 42s and Cpl Montague in 2h 43m.

An RN winning margin of two minutes was hard-fought and well earned.

Cdr Steve Ramm, the senior RN officer in Washington had great delight in presenting the Challenge Cup to the Brits.

The RN ladies also ran good races with Lt Penny Armand-Smith first home in an excellent time of 3h 20m.

PO(NN) Lucy Norman finished strongly ten minutes behind her, while Musn Kiri Wedlock crossed

the line on 3h 40m. The first two USMC ladies were only marginally faster than the Britons, but enough to take the ladies' Challenge Cup.

Both teams enjoyed a post-race reception with the USMC having to provide the champagne for the cup.

Throughout the week *Runners World* magazine interviewed and photographed the teams in order to publish a major article on this unique running challenge.

The RN team is ageing rapidly and new young talent (anyone under 35!) is required.

Anyone wishing to get involved in RN/RM distance running should contact Lt Cdr Gough at Temeraire or Cdr Rich at Yeovilton.

Rough riders' RAF victory

THE RN and RM Cycling Association had a very successful weekend at the RAF Mountain Bike Championships, with five riders placed in the top ten in the cross-country race, plus top spot in the downhill event.

This year's event took place at the Longmoor training area in Hampshire.

The action-packed weekend saw a downhill race, a night race, a cross-country race and an enduro event.

The downhill was emphatically won by L/Cpl Glen Preece. He also turned his hand to cross-country, taking a superb eighth place.

The other successful riders in the cross country were Maj Andy Plewes (second), Maj Steve McCulley (third), Maj Si Rogers (fifth), WO Nobby Clark (sixth) and WO Jimmy Knibbs (12th). Jimmy would have probably placed higher up the field, but he arrived late, literally just making it to the start line before the race was off.

The course was roughly five miles long and comprised a mixture of undulating terrain, firetrack, wooded sections and a couple of 'interesting' descents. Although only three laps, it made for a testing 65-90 minutes' racing.

The race also doubled up as the final round (of ten) of the Combined Services' series.

Full results to follow, however the Navy has provisionally taken first (L/Cpl Ben Deakin) and second (L/Cpl Preece) in the downhill series, and second (Maj Plewes) and third (Maj McCulley) in the cross-country series.

This success is a result of significant personal commitment throughout the whole season.

The relatively-new downhill series saw some very tight racing between the Navy's top two boys; they fought off their main challengers from the RAF, and the cross-country results reflected a very tight season-long battle.

Steve's very strong final result saw him catapult himself from fifth place in the series into the medals, and Andy's overall series placing was decided in the final 200 metres in a 'winner takes all' scenario.

Throughout the race Andy and the RAF's Cpl Dan Lewis (the eventual race and Combined Services' winner) were separated by no more than two bike lengths.

Boom boom for Basel

A PARTY of 14 Maritime Reservists flew to Basel in Switzerland for the 5th International St Barbara Shooting Competition at the barracks in the nearby town of Liestal.

The team comprised two officers, four senior and eight junior ratings from HM Ships King Alfred and President and the RNR Air Branch.

The contest is different from other NATO competitions as it concentrates purely on marksmanship.

The weapons used are the Stgw 57 (7.50mm assault rifle), the Stgw 90 (5.56mm assault rifle) and a Sig 9mm pistol.

For the first rifle shoot, a computer display is used to show the fall of shot. For the second, only the first two shots are marked back then you have to complete the detail and hope for the best. It is the second shoot that determines whether you win a medal, so you have to think hard as to which rifle you chose.

This year's team consisted of many junior ratings who had never fired, or even held a pistol.

The senior team members were allowed by the Swiss range staff to coach these new shooters and also to act as safety ratings during the pistol competition.

The coaching must have worked because there were some excellent scores recorded by all of the UK shooters.

Clash of the Titans... and Hyenas

THE RN ice hockey team rebounded from their first defeat of the season in Cardiff (7-5 to the Titans) with a hard-fought win against the Basingstoke Hyenas 2-1 at Planet Ice, Basingstoke.

The Cardiff fixture had been the biggest test of the season to date, with the Senior Service taking on the Summer Cup runners-up, writes Lt Cdr Al Bernard.

The Titans are one of the best recreational sides in the southern UK but the RN acquitted themselves well, remaining on a par with their Welsh rivals.

It was not until the Titans scored late in the third period that the fate of the contest was decided. Mid Stu Barrow (Southampton URNU) and Mne Mark Wheeler (42 Cdo) both found the back of the net in their first game in a RN jersey.

The next game saw the side travel to Basingstoke, the second clash of a home-and-away series against their Hampshire rivals.

The RN scraped by 6-5 in the first encounter at home in Gosport, a game marked the first appearances for Lt Mike Allinson (HMS Middleton) and Mne Ben Foster-Rankin (CTCRM) while L/Cpl Carl Edwards, the Navy's No.1 keeper, made a return between the pipes after several months of pre-deployment training for Afghanistan.

The game was a defensive contest, with few opportunities at either end, and Edwards turned away all but one shot that came his way.

Both of the RN goals came on the penalty kill when the squad's concerted pressure forced the Hyenas to lose the puck in their own zone and offer up the scoring opportunities which would be the difference in the low-scoring match.

The Navy's next fixture is against the RAF in Dundee, a match which will serve as the high-profile final game of the annual RAF Championships.

Ice hockey has made significant progress over the last few years and is set to join the

list of mainstream sports recognised by the Combined Services Sports Board, provided the final little blocks can fall into place.

Attaining recognised status would be the culmination of four years' hard work by individuals in all three Services and will enable the Forces to progress the sport even further.

The standard of play at the Inter-Services level can easily be equated to English National League level and the annual tournament has grown into one of the largest ice hockey tournaments in the UK.

The players will take a break from mid-December until early January, but next month sees a high-profile fixture against the Army in support of Help for Heroes and the Royal Navy Benevolent Fund.

The RN train at Planet Ice, Gosport, in addition to playing two monthly fixtures against civilian and service teams.

Details are available at the RNIHA website www.rniha.org.uk.

Indoor fireworks

Continued from page 48

After that, a rejuvenated Neptune pressed hard eventually scoring the equaliser.

The match ended at 1-1, so it was over to the sand-based pitch for penalty flicks.

With five flicks each Neptune stepped up to have the first strike, from here it was a battle of wits with both keepers in determined mood. Drake's keeper WO2 'Foz' Foster pulled off a number of saves to put his team in the driving seat.

With two flicks still remaining, up stepped CPO Fraser to score what was to prove the winning flick putting Drake into the final.

In the other semi final BRNC put in an outstanding performance to beat Seahawk 2-0 and booked an all-Devonshire final.

Drake started the brighter, pushing Dartmouth back into their 23 for a considerable period.

BRNC soaked up the pressure and adjusted their strategy, beginning to play a good counter-attacking style of hockey.

They took every opportunity to break hard and fast, putting Drake under pressure.

Both keepers were brought into action on numerous occasions but remained resolute keeping the opposition out.

The sides were deadlocked at half-time and frantic team talks only served to heighten the tension and determination of both sides.

The teams pushed on with good-quality hockey being played throughout the second period.

At the final whistle it remained scoreless thanks to the heroic efforts of both keepers meaning that the competition would be decided on penalties.

BRNC won the toss and struck first; their first flick was hard and low, bringing off a determined save by Drake's keeper and as in the match, this high standard of keeping was matched by the Dartmouth shot-stopper.

As Drake stepped up for their final flick the scores were level at 3-3 and the captain had an opportunity to win the cup.

With the tension mounting, the flick was saved by the BRNC keeper, condemning everyone to even more tension and another five penalties.

In what proved to be the final five flicks, both keepers were proving hard to beat with WO2 'Foz' Foster coming out on top with three outstanding saves in the final batch of five taken by Dartmouth, meaning a long-overdue return to HMS Drake for the cup.

Net results at Yeovilton

HMS Heron's netball squad are celebrating their meteoric rise through the Yeovil and District Summer Netball League with promotion from Division 4 to Division 2 in just two seasons.

Formed in September 2007 and comprising Service personnel, wives and girlfriends, the team were runners-up in Division 4 at the end of the league season, earning promotion to Division 3 as a result.

The team started with fewer than ten players but by the end of that first season numbers had doubled.

The assault on Division 3 saw the team win 12 of their 13 matches to top the league by the end of the season with 62 points from a possible 65.

In addition, the squad also picked up the Alison Mead trophy for being the 3rd/4th Division side which progressed the furthest in the knock-out cup, reaching the quarter finals before being defeated.

The squad has begun winter training this year with 28 players and is hoping to enter a second team in the league next year.

Potential players should contact 01935 456712 / 456713.



Picture: Tom Hurley

Rowers try coastal command

FOR the first time the RN mustered full crews in both the men's and ladies' quadruple sculling event at the World Outdoor Rowing Championships, staged over three days in Plymouth Sound.

The competition drew more than 450 rowers from 18 nations – including a significant number of former Olympians – racing in single, double or coxed quadruple sculls around an eight-kilometre open water course in almost any weather condition.

The combination of wind and waves off Plymouth meant conditions were right on the very limits for quadruple sculls, and so severe that a reduced course had to be used by the

singles and doubles.

The RN teams (*the ladies are pictured above on the home straight*) took to the water in a brand new, state-of-the-art boat, built by Rushworth Racing.

Operational and training pressures meant that, unlike virtually all other competitors who formed established crews, the RN squad was only able to row together from RM Turnchapel on a couple of occasions before the event, and most crew members had never rowed in conditions as wild as on finals day.

It was therefore an impressive result that both crews were placed 18th in their respective 'A' finals, each having faced close battles with

other crews around the course.

Once he had got his breath back, team captain Cdr Alan Grant said: "That was tough – a real test of attitude and determination. I am very proud of what the guys and girls have achieved in such a short time."

Next year, the World Championships will be held in Istanbul, and plans are already being drawn up for RN crews to compete in a number of UK coastal regattas in preparation for the event.

Anyone interested in taking up coastal rowing should contact Cdr Grant at akgrantobe@hotmail.com or Lt Cdr Suzannah Curtis at suzannah.curtis708@mod.uk

No seasonal cheer

THE first competitive fixture of the season saw the RN U23s take on a strong Cambridge University side on a rain-lashed afternoon.

The RN started brightly and with six debutants in the squad looked to take the initiative; a new central defensive partnership of Mne Scott Sampson (42 Cdo) and AB Pannell (HMS Illustrious) looked assured and composed.

AET Musemeki (HMS Heron) had the first chance of the game but lashed the ball over after good work on the right from AET Rayson (HMS Sultan); against the run of play, a long ball over the top of the RN defence saw AET Isaksen (HMS Sultan), outstripped by the Cambridge left winger who finished with aplomb past ETME Hillbourne (HMS Ark Royal) to leave the RN trailing by a single goal at half time.

The second period started much the same as the first, with the RN team pressing forward and keeping the Cambridge side on the back foot, but they were finding it increasingly difficult to unlock a resolute Cambridge defence.

More half chances were created, usually through the creativity of AET Brookes (Culdrose) and ET(ME) Stockton (HMS Daring), but the RN players were unable to convert them and the match finished with Cambridge University running out 1-0 winners.

U23 manager WO1 Steve Rule (HMS Collingwood) was particularly pleased with the performance of the six debutants who looked comfortable on the ball.

The Navy Youth also played their first competitive game in the South East Counties competition against Sussex Youth.

Despite losing to a strong, well established team the U19s should be commended having only come together for the first time on the Saturday before.

The majority of the squad had only recently completed their initial training at Raleigh.

The opening exchanges from the Navy side displayed some promising moves, however, after 15 minutes, they were caught unaware and Sussex went ahead from a well-struck 20-yard volley.

The lead was further increased



Onside with Lt Cdr Neil Horwood, RNFA

on 29 minutes from the penalty spot with the Sussex centre forward brought down just inside the penalty area.

The Navy's best chances fell to AB(WS) Palmer (Manchester), who headed narrowly wide on 34 minutes, and AB McGeady (Collingwood) who was through on goal only for the Sussex keeper to save well at his feet on 41 minutes.

Just before half time, Sussex added a further goal from another well-executed move down the left-hand side of the pitch.

During the second half the Navy never gave up trying to pull the score back and came close on a number of occasions, but just failed to find the back of the net. AB McGeady again came close on 72 minutes, shooting just over from the edge of the box.

Sussex Youth experience continued to show throughout the second half and by full time they had managed to score a further three goals to secure a winning margin of 6-0.

In atrocious weather conditions that were more akin to standing on the forecastle of a Type 14 frigate in a force ten gale in the North Sea (something that John Gwynne knows nothing about), the RN Veterans entertained a much younger Hampshire Police side. Even with a strong wind and driving rain in their faces the RN had the better of the opening exchanges and looked good on the counter attack.

The first effort on goal came in the 16th minute from the ever enthusiastic Paul Lewsley. Good inter play between Jim Smith and Lewsley saw his shot scrape the police crossbar.

The RN were guilty of giving possession away too often and paid the penalty in the 25th minute when a poor clearance found a police forward who hit an unstoppable shot into the roof of the net to go 1-0 ahead.

The police increased this lead in the 31st minute with a carbon-copy of the opening goal.

Good play between the experienced Bob Brady and

Steve Johnson released Jim Smith whose powerful drive was well apprehended by the police keeper at the second attempt.

In the 35th minute a poor clearance from the RN keeper Jim Mullen fell at the feet of a police forward who volleyed into an empty net to give the Police a 3-0 lead at half time.

There were four changes at half time which seemed to spur the home side on.

With the wind now at their backs they created lots of chances and put the police on the back foot. Steve Johnson saw a great shot go close before a great Lewsley run into the penalty area saw him taken out. Penalty!

Captain for the night Steve Rule saw his penalty saved but was fortunate to collect the rebound and bundle the ball home, 3-1.

Wayne Hodgkinson was a constant threat with his pace and created openings that the RN failed to convert. The home team were well on top but paid the price for yet another poor pass which found the police forward who caught the RN defence square to score with ease. The match finished 4-1 in favour of Hampshire Police.

The women's second match of the season was against Salisbury City Ladies at Raymond McEnhill Stadium, Salisbury. The game could not have begun any worse for the RN when they conceded their first goal after only six minutes.

Despite this early set back, the Navy started to try to build on the good work from the previous match, with some nice inter-passing between LA (SE) Amy King (HMS Seahawk) and LMA Michelle Armer (HMS Excellent) culminating in AB Sarah Mansfield (HMS Echo) being given the ball in an advanced attacking position. The well-organised Salisbury defence were quick to react to the danger and the ball was cleared.

On 15 minutes Salisbury got a well-deserved second goal after some really good passing and movement.

The Navy were dealt another blow only a minute later when one of its most consistent players,

Michelle Armer, had to be stretched off the pitch with ankle damage.

After some restructuring and the introduction of Logs Amy Trakos (HMS Neptune), the RN attempted to gain some momentum again and for the next 25 minutes looked capable of getting a foothold on the game. Salisbury, however, were having other ideas and easily dealt with the vast majority of Navy attacks.

The Navy's defence now began to look solid, dealing with all the Salisbury attacking; Logs Naomi Marsh (HMS Endurance) again performed well.

The RN came out for the second half buoyed by the improving performance of the later stages of the first half while Salisbury emerged with the knowledge that the Navy were going to be fired up and that as they chased the game, gaps would inevitably be exposed.

Unfortunately for the Senior Service, this is exactly what happened. A rushed pass went directly to a Salisbury player who broke forward leaving a three-against-one situation on the edge of the RN penalty area. There was only going to be one outcome and the Salisbury forward calmly finished past a justifiably unhappy goalkeeper, LLogs Louise Lee (HMS Daring), 3-0 Salisbury.

The Navy struggled to get going again, partly down to Salisbury's movement and increased possession of the ball. The constant desire to give the ball directly back to the opposition after having worked very hard to gain possession did not help matters. On 65 minutes Salisbury scored a fourth after gaining possession from an unforced error and questionable defending.

After this the Navy started to slowly get back into the game; a change of tactics and a reshuffle of players saw them begin to settle in to a style of play aimed at trying to reduce the space in the centre of the pitch.

Attacking down the flanks put the opposition fullbacks under pressure and led to the Navy creating a couple of good chances but just not being able to find the final telling pass.

The final minutes saw both teams have spells of pressure but tiredness set in and no more clear chances were produced. Salisbury ran out worthy 4-0 winners.

SPORT

Windsurfers Hayl' storm

Continued from page 48

good performance throughout the weekend. In a season which has seen him move up through the UKWA rankings to the point where he is challenging for the Formula National fleet title, he is now the Navy's windsurfing champion. Gerry Northwood was second and Steve Roberts, in his first Inter-Services and only the second time racing, was third.

In rather more benign conditions, a ten-strong RN team took part in the annual Highland Spring HIHO 09 in and around the British Virgin Islands.

Now in its 25th year, the Highland Spring HIHO (Hook In and Hang On) attracted a strong fleet of over 50 windsurfers.

The RN team competed in the largest HIHO fleet, the Techno class, racing their windsurfers over long distances between and among the islands in the archipelago.

The courses for two of the races were over 20 nautical miles and one of the races – to Anegada – requires racers to put their faith in the directors instructions, as the finish line is well over the horizon; about 12nms to be precise and the racers are briefed to look for the "green cloud – Anegada Island and the finish will be under the cloud!"

The RN team acquitted themselves well. Steve Roberts (current reigning Navy Wavesailing champion) came in first in the RN team and first in his class – Man Class (U35s).

Cdrs Wallis and Northwood were third and fourth respectively in the grand master class.



Steve's Grim fairy tale

GREEN beret Maj Steve McCulley took third place in the ominously-named Grim Duathlon, beating 385 racers.

The off-road duathlon took place on the military training area around Aldershot and comprised of a 5km cross-country run, a 20km mountain bike and another 5km cross-country run.

The race certainly lived up to its grim name with four-foot-deep water ditches to contend with on the bike and 25-foot cargo nets to scramble under during the runs.

Steve managed to complete the 5/20/5 race in an impressive 1h 32m 6s – five seconds ahead of the fourth-place competitor.

"It was a tough, but really enjoyable race and my best result of the year," Steve said.

To put his achievement into perspective, the winner has represented Great Britain as an elite and age group triathlete.

The duathlon was Steve's last race of 2009 and he is now concentrating on the start of the 2010 mountain bike season.

Next month



Warming the cockles of the British heart, part 1 – stunning HMS Ajax cutaway



Warming the cockles of the British heart, part 2 – the work of the School of Flight Deck Operations



Rootin', tootin', Astutin' – life aboard a 21st-Century submarine

SPORT



Indoor fireworks

ONE hundred and fifty-four goals shared among 110 participants in ten teams over 16 matches neatly sums up the exciting Inter-Command men's and women's indoor hockey tournament at HMS Collingwood.

Despite Air Command winning the women's event, Scotland took the honours in more ways than one: Lt Danelle McKenna and AC Leah Payne come from "somewhere up there" while mum LAET Charlie Manchester showed touches of her former England class from her caps at U16, U18 and U21 level.

Naval Air earned the bragging rights for the next 12 months from Portsmouth, Plymouth came third with veteran PO Vicky Donovan again top scoring, but it was Scotland in fourth place who earned their own special bit of immortality.

Scotland secretary PO(SA) Steve Parfitt was having trouble finding enough players; discussing his problems with RN hockey stalwarts LLogs Hammy Hammond and LPT Marc Dowling. A team from the under-refit HMS Campbelltown and Neptune was quickly trained up and sent south to do battle with the Sassenachs.

From humble beginnings, these young women led by CPOMEA Wendy Frame (Dauntless) and coached by the RN women's coach – none other than the RN hockey chairman Cdre Mark Darlington – fought their socks off. They did not win a single match but they improved at every outing and fighting spirit was very much in evidence.

As someone said, those ladies from Scotland enjoyed every second of their three defeats; and as someone else said, you don't get too many flag officers coaching command-level hockey teams.

The men's event was conspicuous by the number of top quality and experienced players not present.

The fact that so many stalwarts were committed at the sharp end of Naval Service enabled debuts to be made by more than 25 newcomers.

Naval Air narrowly overcame Portsmouth in the opening men's match and the experienced Royals saw off a not-quite-yet-in-gear Plymouth, still recovering from their drive from the West Country. Naval Air then overcame a travel-weary Scotland.

Performance of the first day was the consigning by Plymouth's



● A desperate (and illegal) lunge from PO(AET) Georgina Patterson on the ground as the Naval Air Command captain tries to block a shot from Portsmouth Command's Lt Danelle McKenna

Picture: Keith Woodland

depleted squad – making do with a squad of seven – of the 12-man Portsmouth team 4-2.

Portsmouth looked as if they would have benefitted from a pre-event practice match – not always possible these days.

The Royal Marines, probably predictably, outlasted Scotland – from leading 2-1 at half time in a very tough match, Royal went a long way ahead with 5 goals in ten minutes with Scotland only managing to get to 2-7 by the end.

The following day Plymouth's youngsters beat Scotland 6-5, overnight leaders Naval Air and RM both unbeaten went head to head with Royal probably consigning Naval Air to eventual second place with a 6-2 defeat.

Scotland and Portsmouth then fought out a 5-5 draw, the relatively high standard of this match belied the fact that both looked like they would end up being wooden-spoon contenders.

The airmen walloped Plymouth with the highest aggregate score of the tournament, 13-7.

Traditionally Pompey and Royal have fought out the final match: 6-6 in 2008, 5-6 in 2007. This time Royal ragged, bagged and dispatched Portsmouth 11-2.

The green berets and Naval Air Command now go forward – if possible – to the tri-Service Inter-

Command competition.

Scotland pipped Portsmouth for fourth place leaving Portsmouth with the wooden spoon thanks to a four-goal inferior goal difference. Meanwhile outdoors...

Eight teams met at HMS Temeraire to battle it out for the 2009 Navy Cup.

The re-invigorated format of a two-day mixed tournament saw the number of entrants double from last year, confirming the hard decision taken to change from the long-standing single-sex knockout competition format.

This year saw strong entries from Drake, BRNC, Sultan, Collingwood, Nelson, Neptune, Heron and Seahawk.

The eight teams were divided into two pools of four for the preliminary round robin matches.

Drake were drawn in a hard pool against Sultan, Nelson and Seahawk. All of the early matches were hard-fought affairs but also demonstrated the difficulties that all teams had in getting players together due to operational commitments.

All the teams took time to gel with some never having played together before and in some cases only having met each other the previous day.

Drake started their assault with a dogged 1-1 draw with Nelson. That was followed by a much-

improved performance against Sultan with Drake eventually coming out victorious 5-3.

It was during this match that Drake front pairing of CPO 'Frankie' Fraser and AB Mitch Blakemore stated to bond and find their scoring touch with Blakemore coming off after scoring a hat-trick.

The final pool match was a tough battle with Seahawk seesawing back and forth before finally ending in a 2-2 draw.

Other results from the pool meant that Drake and Seahawk, both undefeated, made the semi-finals.

There Drake faced last year's Navy Cup and tri-Service champions Neptune while Seahawk were pitted against BRNC, also undefeated.

In the first semi, Drake took to the field in confident mood. Both teams displayed a high standard of play, with Drake pushing hard from the first whistle. Their early onslaught drew first blood with a well taken goal from open play.

The West Country side continued to press and their determination looked to have borne fruit when they were awarded a penalty flick, but this was not to be; the team's hearts sank when the flick sailed just past the keeper's right hand post.

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Windsurfers Hayl' storm

YOU don't need us to tell you it was a windy weekend on Hayling Island for the Inter-Service windsurfing competition – the picture suffices.

A relatively inexperienced Royal Navy windsurfing team took part in one of the most exciting and demanding IS competitions for years.

Southwesterly winds of Force 5-7 whipped the seas up off Hayling Beach and in such conditions it was decided that the competition should consist of slalom rather than the usual course racing.

Two of the RN's most experienced and successful sailors of recent years, Paul Morris and Johnny Walker, were not available to compete owing to operational commitments.

This left the field open for Lt 'Fish' Fisher, PO Gav Nicholson and AB(D) Steve Roberts to gain their RNSA colours. They joined RN regulars WO Dave Strudwick and Cdrs Adrian Wallis and Gerry Northwood.

The first two races were conducted in onshore conditions and most sailors were out initially on eight to ten-metre sails and their largest slalom boards.

Adrian showed early form with a third and fifth place. A third race was held as the wind veered SW and strengthened. With the course requiring resetting this race was abandoned and racing was declared complete for the day.

More southwesterly 5-7 winds were predicted for the second day, so it was decided to run Sunday's races from the beach with a three-lap figure of eight course.

Most sailors were initially out on eight to nine-metre sails but as the wind strengthened during the final four races, most competitors were breaking out six-metre sails and smaller slalom boards. Steve hit form with a third and second and in the final race Gerry pulled off a second-place result.

Throughout the team did well with some really determined performances in some of the most testing (and fun) conditions.

In the final analysis the Army demonstrated that they have real strength in depth and were clear leaders ahead of the Navy and RAF.

In the Royal Navy championships, Adrian Wallis put in a consistently-

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